IMF upgrades RP's '07, '08 growth forecast

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND yesterday upgraded its economic growth outlook for the Philippines for this year and the next but underscored the need to boost tax collection and enhance the country's investment climate to sustain a higher growth path over the medium term.

"This has been a strong year for the Philippines," Z Hoong Lee, the head of the IMF mission, told reporters as he ended his two-week annual country review.

In the first three quarters of this year,

WORLD / A27

1st regular train service links North and South Korea

ACROSS / A17

Draft of final MILF peace pact prepared

NEWS / A2

Senate passes P1.2-T 2008 budget in 2 weeks

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, December 12, 2007 | 44 | 10 sections | Vol. 22 | No. 4 | P18 | website: www.inquirer.net

ALL EYES ON DAY'S PATH: President Arroyo observes the trees on Roxas boulevard by aiming her car's sun roof while parked on the motorcade route during her visit to Manila City Hall on Tuesday. She left for Europe and Kuwait early Tuesday morning before going on with her usual schedule parked day.

GMA most corrupt President, says poll

She's worse than Marcos –Pulse Asia

AMONG THE FIVE ADMINISTRATIONS the country has had since 1965, President Macapagal-Arroyo's is plagued by the "most intense" corruption allegations, said about half of Filipinos (46 percent) polled by Pulse Asia Inc. in October.

Forty-two percent of the respondents consider Ms Arroyo the "most corrupt President in Philippine history."

The survey also found that more than 60 percent view Gloria Arroyo as the least corrupt Philippine president.

The Pulse Asia survey showed that more Filipinos view Ms Arroyo and her administration as the "most corrupt" compared with former Presidents Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos and

GMA PAYOFF / A10

BEIJING HERO HE COMES. Daniel Coakley celebrates his triumph in the 50m freestyle event in the 24th Southeast Asian Games. Coakley, great grandson of Filipino swimming great Teofilo Yldefonso, reset the SEAG record by finishing in 22.88 seconds. In the process, he handed a ticket to Beijing for breaking the Olympic qualifying mark of 23.13 seconds. (More stories on Pages A29 & 34.)

Filipinos 'upbeat' on '08—survey

FOUR OF EVERY FIVE FILIPINOS ARE "upbeat" about the coming year despite the problems besetting the country, according to the latest survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

Only one of every four, however, said the coming Christmas would not be any different from the previous one.

Eighty-four percent are looking forward to 2008 "with hope"—a sentiment shared by majorities across all geographic areas and socioeconomic groups.

While this figure is not much different from last year's 85 percent, it is much higher than the 70 percent in 2005, Pulse Asia said.

The survey was conducted from Oct. 20 to 31 amid the controversy over the

FILIPINOS A2-3

Palace junked P100-M pork for Trillanes

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Dona Pazzibugan

SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV almost escaped an image scrub at the Presidential Palace Monday after Malacañang said it would not release the P100 million of his pork barrel, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said the DBM decision not to release the funds "could be one of the issues which caused (Trillanes) to stage a rebellion at the Manila Peninsula."

But Reynaldo Robles, Trillanes'

TRILLANES A10

Erap ready to make up with GMA but will fight Cha-cha

By Kristine L. Alave

JOSEPH ESTRADA IS ON FORgiveness mode.

The ousted President and pardoned plunderer yesterday said he was open to reconciliation with his political enemies, particularly his successor, President Macapagal-Arroyo, and his former gambling buddy, ex-Boxe

ERAP A10

Trillanes says sorry to judge but not to GMA

By DJ Yap and Nikko Dizon

LOOKING SOMBER BUT DEFIANT, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and the soldiers accused in a 2003 mutiny yesterday apologized to a judge for walking out of their trial last month but did not say they were sorry to President Arroyo used for mounting a short-lived attempt to topple a people power revolt.

His act of contrition for his call on President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign during the Peninsula Manila hostage standoff Nov. 29 was uttered by the former Navy lieutenant who won a Senate seat campaigning from his jail cell in the May elections.

"The action taken by the accused was prompted by and was intended to call the public's attention to the massive anomalies and persistent incidence of graft and corruption," Trillanes and the other accused said in a written statem

TRILLANES A10

NEVER SO MANY FOR SO FEW: More than a thousand soldiers and cops secure the court inside and outside where Sen. Antonio Trillanes and company who took over the Manila Peninsula Hotel on Nov. 29 return for the first time to the "scene of the crime" on Tuesday at Makati City Hall for the resumption of the 2003 Oakwood mutiny trial.

Gore tells world: Time to stop war on Earth itself

OSLO, NORWAY—ACCEPTING THE Nobel Peace Prize, former US Vice President Al Gore on Monday called on humanity to mobilize at once against the dangers of a changing climate.

"This human crisis is, at heart, a moral challenge to wage war on the Earth itself," Gore said in his acceptance speech. "Now, we and the Earth's climate are locked in a relationship familiar to war planners. Mutually assured destruction. It is time to make peace with the planet."

Gore was awarded the prize for sounding the alarm over global

GORE PRIZE A31

Transco bidding on today; judge dismisses TRO

By Doris C. Dumlao, Abigail L. Ho
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT has handed a setback to the government's privatization of one of the country's largest power companies on the way for the bidding set today for the rehabilitation-plus National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

In a decision handed down on Monday, Judge J. Cordelia Rosa said the pe

TRANSCO A10

Power, water rates soar; P1 'pan de sal' is history

By Ronnel W. Domingo, Abigail L. Ho
and Amy R. Remo

BRACE YOURSELVES.

This month alone, the price of pan de sal will increase to P2.50 and Manila Electric Co. will hike power charges by 6 centavos per kilowatt hour. Following closely is Manila Water Co. Inc. which will raise its water rates beginning Jan. 1, 2008.

The P1 pan de sal is history, according to these groups of bakers.

The price of pan de sal would increase this month to P2.50 each amid the continued increase in the cost of wheat, flour and other inputs.

Also, the price of a loaf of bread would go up starting next week by 3 percent, up to P65 for independent or neighborhood bakeries and P122 for the big players.

The three groups are the Philippine Federation of Bakers Associations Inc. (PFBAI) and the Filipino Chinese Bakers Association Inc. (FCBAI)—representing the small players—said the Philippine Baking Industry Group, which includes Gardenia Bakeries, Julie's Bakeshop, Creative Bakers, French Baker and other established brands.

In a joint media briefing, association officials said bakeries had been suffering the past six months due to the up-

POWER A-10

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 SIX DIGIT

6/42 LUZON-VIS-MIN

₱4,749,670.80

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **AT LONG LAST,** Gonzalez may get confirmation /A4

■ **METROBANK** told to pay P3.8B in taxes /A8

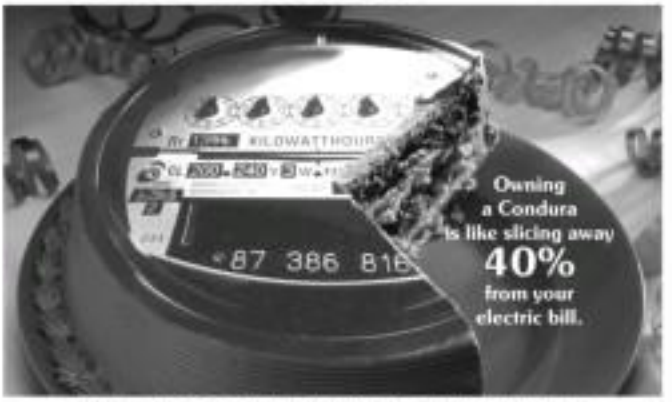
Senate passes P1.2-T '08 budget in 2 weeks

YOU WANT TO SAVE ON ELECTRICITY?

☒ Don't buy an aircon.

☒ Don't use your aircon.

☑ Make sure your aircon is a Condura.



FASTKY

CONDURA

With 2 amendments, 14-0 vote, spending bill sails through

By Doris E. Paz Roque

THE SENATE IN RECORD TIME approved last night its version of the P1.222-trillion national budget for 2008 after two weeks of marathon deliberations.

With a vote of 14-0 and no abstentions, the Senate passed the budget bill on third and final reading after making two major amendments on debt interest payments and Bidoodstang's new antipoverty program, Kilos Asenso.

The Senate plans to go quickly into bicameral conference committee meetings with the House of Representatives to reconcile their respective versions of the budget bill, hoping to have the final version ready for President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature before the end of the year.

The House and Senate are set to go on Christmas breaks on Dec. 21.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of the Senate finance committee, accepted the amendments introduced by Senators Panfilo Lacson and Benigno Aquino III last night, paving the way for the bill's approval on second reading.

The chamber immediately went on to pass the measure on third reading. The bill had been certified urgent by Malacañang.

Slash in debt service

Lacson had urged Enrile to consider making a further slash in Malacañang's proposed ₱295.7 billion allocation for debt interest payments, and to realign the funds to health services.

In its version of the budget bill, the House cut ₱17.8 billion from the ₱295.7-billion allocated on debt interest payments and realigned the funds to social services, including a ₱4.7-billion increase in the Department of Health's outlay.

Enrile had originally removed ₱11.1 billion in debt interest payments, and cut only ₱6.7 billion based on estimated savings from the expected steepest peso-exchange rate against the dollar next year.

But yesterday Enrile agreed to insert a special provision in the budget bill that would allow a further reduction in debt interest payment allocations subject to a stronger peso exchange rate, with the freed funds automatically realigned to social services.

₱100M realigned

Aquino, meanwhile, moved to shift ₱100 million from the P6 billion allocated to Malacañang's Kilos Asenso program, and to realign the P100 million to the budgets of the education and health departments.

Enrile readily agreed to the cut in Kilos Asenso outlay.

Senate President Manuel Villar congratulated Enrile for steering the national budget through the chamber so quickly.

The Senate held whole-day sessions the past two weeks to debate the budgets of each government agency.

In the Senate version of the national budget, the Department of Education received an outlay of ₱130 billion, public works and highways ₱90.72 billion, national defense ₱84.4 billion, agriculture ₱26.6 billion, transportation and communication ₱39 billion, health ₱14.5 billion and foreign affairs ₱8.88 billion. The judiciary received ₱14.6 billion.

On Monday, the Senate restored a special provision inserted by the House of Representatives that would suspend interest payments on foundation loans.

The special provision states: "No amount shall be used for the payment of interest payments on debts which are challenged as fraudulent, unlawful and/or unconscionable."

This could free up funds intended for debt servicing to other government programs, according to the debt watchdog group Freedom from Debt Coalition.

Cebu solon raps 2 colleagues on cheaper meds bill

By Christian V. Esguerra

CEBU CITY (PHILIPPINES) — Rep. Pablo Garcia has scolded two congressional colleagues for allegedly alluding to him as the one blocking the passage of the Cheaper Medicines Bill.

Garcia took to the floor last Monday to denounce Iloilo Rep. Raymond Mitra, the measure's principal author, and Pulanguis Rep. Antonio Alvarez, chair of the committee that consolidated 23 bills seeking to lower the prices of medicines in the country.

"They're trying to picture me as against the bill and the people. But I would rather be right than popular—right by my conscience, right by the Constitution," Garcia said.

The Iloilanon reporter last weekend how Mitra and Alvarez spoke of their growing suspicion of a colleague's conduct on the passage of the Cheaper Medicines bill, or HB 2644. Mitra said he would not "read" the actions of the unnamed colleague.

Passage of cheaper bill

Neither lawmaker identified the colleague, but Garcia said they must have been referring to him.

"I challenge them to name that congressman. If they are sure of the strength of their bill, they should not be afraid to speak the basis," he said.

"It's not my fault if they cannot understand my questions," he said.

Garcia apparently drew suspicions because of the concurrent stance the bill that he had been saying for more than a week at one point, he engaged Alvarez's committee on trade and industry in a debate for more than an hour.

"This bill is very popular with our people and I am now being portrayed or pictured as against the passage of this bill," he said.

"[But] even after this bill is passed, nothing will happen for two or three years," Garcia said.

HB 2644 is an amalgam of strategies seeking to provide consumer access to cheaper medicines, noting that medicines in the Philippines were the second most expensive in Asia.

One such approach is the amendment of the Intellectual Property Code to allow the parallel importation of patented drugs. Critics point out that the importation should also eliminate cell patent drugs since patented ones made up only less than 10 percent of the local pharmaceutical market.

In his privilege speech, Garcia said existing provisions of the IPC would have been enough to allow the exploitation of patents of key drugs so long as public interest required it.

He said government agencies were authorized to make such a judgment call without the Prudence having to declare a national emergency, a provision that Alvarez's committee added to HB 2644.

Provisions of IPC

"The provisions of the present Intellectual Property Code would have sufficed, but then the committee added conditions which would favor the multinational patent holders. Was it not proper for me to object?" Garcia said.

Garcia also described as an "affront to national dignity and sovereignty" the inclusion of a provision in the IPC containing the Philippines' compliance with the Doha Declaration on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement.

The agreement's so-called "flexibilities" allow poorer countries to determine when to relax patents on important drugs for the benefit of public health. Through "parallel importation," countries can import off-patent medicines sold at much cheaper prices in other parts of the world.

Garcia said the bill was "a self-inflicted denigration of the dignity of Congress and its powers."

"Why should this Congress be subjected to comply with an unjust unilateral agreement? Why do we have to do it?" he said.

Until such issues are addressed, Garcia said HB 2644 will only give the public "false hopes" that the measure would make medicines affordable and available.

Smuggled onions seized

By Margaux Ovis

THE SMUGGLED onions just keep coming in.

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has seized 17 containers of smuggled onions that arrived on board five different vessels at the Manila International Container Port (MICP) from China in October and November.

Customs officials led by Commissioner Napoleon Morales yesterday inspected the 40-foot vans containing smuggled onions with an estimated worth of P25 million.

The onions were all consigned to Silver Raine Trading which declared them as apples, Morales said.

Customs intelligence and investigation bureau officers recommended the cargo for X-ray scanning after receiving information that a big shipment of onions would be passed off as apples, a common agricultural product on the eve of the Christmas season.

SC junks petition to declare water firms as public utilities

By Lelo B. Saavedra

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DISMISSED a suit filed by nongovernment groups and lawmakers seeking to declare water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. as public utilities in order to prevent water price increases.

The petitioners wanted the high court to nullify two resolutions of the the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and its regulatory office declaring that the concessionaires were not public utilities.

In dismissing the suit, the high court said the petitioners failed to follow the proper procedures and raised questions of fact that the tribunal could not tackle.

It said the petitioners also failed to cite the constitutional provision that the MWSS resolutions supposedly violated.

The suit was filed by the Freedom from Debt Coalition, the Akbayan Citizens' Action Party, the alliance of Progressive Labor, representatives Renato Magtubo, Joel Villanueva, Eduardo Zialcita, Mauro Agoja and Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, Ms. Theresa Jenkins Dorotan, Mary Ann Manahan and Philippine Aida Espanol Jr.

Named respondents were the MWSS and the MWSS Regulatory Office.

The petitioners asked the high court to declare Maynilad and Manila Water as public utilities and not just mere concessionaires because of the nature of the service they provide.

They said that if the two concessionaires are not declared public utilities, they would be enabled from the 12 percent limitation on their rate of return and exempted from the refund of excess collections that the Supreme Court had ordered the Manila Electric Co., the electricity distributor, to do.

This would then lead to an increase in water rates, said the petitioners who also sought a temporary restraining order against the MWSS resolutions.

The petitioners argued that Maynilad and Manila Water should be considered public utilities since the Public Service Act states that "public service" refers to persons that control, manage or operate, among others, water supply and a sewerage system.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ultimate Sex: Does Your Partner Secretly Wish You Had These 4 "Abilities"?

Are you as good in bed today as you were in your twenties? Age, hypertension, diabetes, alcohol, smoking, and stress lower men's performance scores. Worse, testosterone and women's sexual arousal decrease by as much as 50% with every decade in MEN. The secret is in the 4 "abilities" that make for deliciously great sex. Hard and sustained erections. Long orgasms. Quick recoveries so a second round for MORE sex. And an unbridled, lusty partner. Good news is you CAN suppress these declines and turn back the clock.

Erection drugs work half an hour before. Sometimes, but for many men it doesn't work. And if you take a short-acting erection drug, you have a 24-minute performance window, and no refund if it's one minute too late or too soon. A new drug, Vigorelle, is the only drug with clinical evidence that it helps restore all 4 "abilities" in men and women. Vigorelle is a natural supplement that can be taken every day. It's not a drug. It's not addictive. It's not habit forming. It's not a hormone. It's not a testosterone supplement. It's not a herbal supplement. It's not a vitamin. It's not a mineral. It's not a protein. It's not a fat. It's not a carbohydrate. It's not a sugar. It's not a starch. It's not a fiber. It's not a water. It's not a salt. It's not a mineral. It's not a vitamin. It's not a protein. It's not a fat. It's not a carbohydrate. It's not a sugar. It's not a starch. It's not a fiber. It's not a water. It's not a salt.

Some natural supplement work and are safe. But because of supplements that give you the same effect as a drug – they may actually contain drug. The fast-acting "supplements" that boast fantastic sales are illegal. Personally, as all natural sex pill that is not known to damage is your best. WATERLOOS a MUST-approved, contains no dangerous chemicals, needs no doctor's prescription, and has a 14-year safety record. Previous users say it helps to turn ONE bottle (for increased libido and desire). Packages of anticipation itself as does or boost before the act. That's exactly not as to satisfy him. In a UK survey, 6 out of 7 men and women said Viagra's 4 hr "window of opportunity" is unacceptable, with 10-20 days' use. Available now in most pharmacy drug outlets. Get at least 15 tablets – more you're worth it, you will receive an additional 5. For more info call hotline (02) 845-1706 and (02) 845-1611. www.gamaan.com

At long last, Gonzalez may get confirmation

By Norman Bordadora

FINALLY, AFTER THREE YEARS and a kidney transplant, staunch defender of the President Raul Gonzalez may be confirmed as secretary of justice before Christmas, Senate City Rep. Prospero Nograles said yesterday.

"My basis is the public statement of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who said he won't object anymore on the justice secretary," said Nograles, head of the House of Representatives committee on the Commission on Appointments. Lacson is a member of the Senate panel in the CA.

"Secondly, he [Gonzalez] just got a new lease on life after a life-threatening transplant," Nograles added.

If Gonzalez is confirmed, it would be after three years of repeatedly being bypassed by the influential bicameral commission which screens presidential appointments to the post.

Despite being ill prior to his operation, Gonzalez remained loyal to President Macapagal-Arroyo and fiercely defended her from her critics.

Nograles appealed to his colleagues in the commission to go easy on Gonzalez this time.

"I would like to appeal to our members to be compassionate and humane and to confirm him as soon as possible," he said.

Nograles said Lacson, a staunch Gonzalez critic, was inclined to support his confirmation.

GONZALEZ

Lacson said he would support Gonzalez's bid to return to work after undergoing a kidney transplant in September."

"I expect some Cabinet secretaries will be confirmed before the Christmas break," Nograles added.

Those expected to get the OK's nod, he said, are former management Gilbert Teodoro as defense secretary and Rolando Andaya as budget secretary. Expected to be confirmed after the holidays are budget secretary, Expedito Ermita as social welfare and Peter Favila as trade and industry.

Asked if Favila's role as a signatory to the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) contract with China's ZTE Corp. that was attended by controversy and shelved by President Arroyo would affect his confirmation chances, Nograles said: "That's a dead issue by this time. Let the Supreme Court and the Ombudsman decide that ZTE issue."

"Those here who may be nominated will be bypassed this year and are will (suffer from) next year when Congress opens, if they are reappointed by the President," Nograles said.

Among those who failed to make Nograles' list of probable uncontested appointees was Mariano "Boy" Morales, former secretary from also figured in the ZTE controversy when his department received the deal.

The NBN deal was clouded by allegations of bribery against former Commission on Elections chairman Benjamin Abalos Sr. and of the involvement of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Earlier this year, Teves' ballet, former Negros Oriental Rep. Herminio Teves, accused some members of the House in the CA at the time of asking for money in exchange for his son's confirmation.

Then Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, the leader of the House contingent in the bicameral Commission, denied any attempt at extortion.

"That allegation has not been proven at all. But it, it was blasted in print and broadcast. It belongs in the area of forgotten memories as far as I'm concerned," Nograles said.

TODO PAMASKONG BIRIT

FREE W/RELESS microphone!

Get a FREE Wireless microphone for every package with TKR 300, or choose from any TODO PAMASKONG BIRIT package and save as much as P 2,000.00. Offer good from Dec. 1, 2007 to January 31, 2008. Tara! Birit na

Corrections

IN THE DEC. 4 ISSUE, a boxy page article—"Opposition takes urgent 'Brancos probe to Hanoi'"—contained the erroneous statement: "Recruiting no [Bukidnon Rep. Teodoro Casiño] Jr. La Costa is one of the biggest power firms in North America."

Casiño made no such statement. La Costa Development Inc., which is registered in the Philippines, is not a big power firm in North America...its partner GDC Leonilla is.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 7 ISSUE, an Across the Nation article on Page A11—"Bishop's wish for gov: birth of 'new Pampanga'"—erroneously described Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio as a Catholic priest on leave. When Panlilio filed his candidacy he remained a priest but he was suspended from performing priestly duties.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 9 ISSUE, an article on Page A6—"Let's talk again, cops tell media"—misstated the surname of the secretary of the interior and local government. The interior secretary is Ronaldo Puno ...not Zamora. Ronaldo Zamora is the congressional representative of San Juan City.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
Our Lady of Guadalupe

1st Reading: Zec 2: 14-17
Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to bear a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let Him done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary:

The readings are of tension, where God made first and who is also beside his people, bringing God delight, playing in the world, and bringing delight to human. An apt description of the woman of Guadalupe, who brought the child who is Wisdom in the world accompanied by the sound of music, flowers, light, and joy. She is the patroness of the Americas, the one who comes to bring together the two worlds and who conquers by serving with the witness and telling them to rejoice for she is their mother first. She brings God's presence and dwelling place to the indigenous people. The rose tattoo, the birth of Jesus, brings true justice to all peoples, in spite of believers' desire action and evil. God wills to make his dwelling place with all people—we are the tabernacles of God's presence.

The "annunciation" is only the beginning—God becomes flesh in the womb of Mary as her submission and word of acceptance, just as God's word becomes part of our flesh as our baptism and upon our acceptance of the Word of God. Mary is really Mary's conception of Wisdom by Elizabeth—the exchange of the Spirit between believers that culminates today ahead of the mission of God for Mexicans and Latinos gives us the lowly, those without existence, the poor, the hungry, and those without power or worth. This is Guadalupe's message to the oppressed. If we call ourselves followers of Mexico before Guadalupe, is this also our message?

Opinions/Editorials/Letters: Editorial Dept., 5F Philippine Inquirer Center, City of Makati, Philippines. Tel. (632) 896-6000. Fax: (632) 896-6060. E-mail: opinion@inquirer.com.ph. Website: http://www.inquirer.net. Circulation: Tel. (632) 896-6000. E-mail: circulation@inquirer.com.ph. Business Office: Tel. (632) 896-6000. E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph. Subscription: http://www.inquirer.net/subscription

Ang galing ng Pinoy ay nasa bagong

Biolink Tea Tree Oil All-Day Fem Spray

Wiping with tissue is not enough. Now, experience total feminine protection with Biolink Tea Tree Oil All-Day Fem Spray, the first feminine hygienic spray that may be used even when you are on the go. Just spray and tissue off everytime you use the bathroom to get complete feminine hygiene, even without water. With its innovative Triple Tea Protection Technology, it kills bad bacteria to give you protection from odor and infection, without the irritation.

Galing ng Pinoy!

Mula sa **SPLASH**

Another quality **innovation** from a truly world-class Filipino company.

Sumilao farmers hit DAR inaction

By TJ Burgonio

HIGANONG PARMERS YESterday scored the Department of Agrarian Reform's inaction on final bid to stop the development of a former corn plantation in Bukidnon into a hog farm further it rules on their 5-ish claim to the land.

The farmers said any further delay in the issuance of a cease and desist order on the construction of a hog farm in the 144-ha estate in Barangay San Vicente, Sumilao town, could weaken their plea anew.

"They should now issue a cease and desist order," Napoleon Ideo, 61, president of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, said in an interview inside their tent outside the DAR building.

The 55 farmers, who walked 1,700 km for nearly two months from Bukidnon to Manila, are asking DAR to annul the conversion, revoke the conversion order, issue a notice of coverage and install them in the estate.

"We've walked this far, and the issue is still hanga in the air," Ideo lamented.

Agrarian reform advocate Cherubim Montesol supports the farmers' demand for the immediate issuance of a CDO while Agrarian Secretary Nasser Pangandaman oversees the merits of the case.

He stressed it was just and fair for DAR to issue a provisional relief, in the form of the CDO, while studying the case, otherwise it could become moot.

"The fair way to do it is for DAR in hill San Miguel, while we're studying the merits, they should stop development first," Marlon Manuel, the counsel for the farmers' group Task Force Mapalad said in an interview.

"We're very apprehensive about the delay. Are they waiting for the issue to become academic, or more complicated, so that the farmers will not get their due? The land simply does not belong to the farmers, why does it take so long for them to make a decision?"

The farmers submitted their position paper to the DAR Monday night on Pangandaman's intervention.

"They're still studying the case; we don't know how long [they will take to decide the case," Montesol said.

The farmers tried but failed to get any comment from Pangandaman.

The farmers argued that the entire should resort to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) and the new series, San Miguel Foods Inc., did not develop the land five years after it was converted into an agro-industrial estate.

The conversion of the hog farm was not mentioned in the conversion order, which cited for the construction of an agro-industrial park, cultural and livelihood centers, sports complex, hotel and restaurant, among others, they said.

DAR awarded the land to 117 farmers in 1991, but this was reversed by Malacañang on the appeal of landowner Hacienda Quiomping and approved its conversion into an agro-industrial estate in 1996, in act of favored by the Supreme Court in 1999.

HS aptitude test eyed as requisite for college

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE NATIONAL CAREER ASSESSMENT Examination, or NCAE, will very likely be made a prerequisite for entering college by 2009, according to Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus.

"It will be made possible with the passage of an enabling law. We have discussed the issue with leaders of both houses of Congress and they all agree with the need for this," said Lapus.

But for now, the NCAE results remain non-mandatory, said Dolla Benitez, director of the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC).

Unlike the defunct National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which was used as a basis for college admission and discontinued in 1994, NCAE results are "strictly used privately for career guidance," said Benitez.

The DepEd has spent more than P56 million for the NCAE which aims to "assess the abilities of students in areas essential for post-secondary careers and provide students information that will help them make wise career decisions," Lapus said.

Aside from assessing students' general scholastic abilities, the NCAE also measures their aptitude in other areas, like occupational interest, and technical-vocational and entrepreneurial skills.

The NCAE, now on its second year, is also administered to out-of-school youths aiming to apply for scholarship programs of the Commission on Higher Education, or CHed.

A total of 1,221,465 senior high school students from more than 11,000 public and private high schools nationwide took the year's NCAE, conducted last August by the NETRC.

Special examinations were held last month for those who failed to take the August test.

The DepEd has started releasing the assessment-"using certificates which will give students "an accurate measure of their potential for college, technical or vocational school or entrepreneurship," said Lapus.

He said 211 high school seniors scored 99 plus percent in this year's NCAE, qualifying them to join the DepEd's elite "Club 99+1."

"At least 13 of them came from public high schools," noted Lapus.

Last year, only five examinees made it to the club.

The new Club 99+1 members are Rae Lei Jhoy Montillo of La Union; Ralph Francis Herong, Isabela; Mark Joseph Gaugase and Axel Philip Advincula, Bulacan; Messeyn Millan, Negros Occidental; William Sun and Francher Delfina, Cebu City; Mary Loraine Hernandez, Bataan; Lea Angelica Alhambra, Baguio City; Arnata Tuazon-gil, Quezon City; Julius Lorenz Cabanilla, Muntinlupang; Lara Alessandra Sequera, Marie Therese Flore and Katrina Villanueva, Pasig; Jewel Lyn Balanquit, Naga; Genevieve Sun; Caryl Generoso, Calbayog; Wolfrid Siebert, Lee Robert Lagapa, Iloilo City; Andrea Rhoda Reyes-Silliena, Gen. Santos City; Luis Anthony Mariano, Quezon; Rose Ann Magnaye, Batangas; and Shiva John Mangal, Leyte.

Dapitan gets ready for Jalosjos return

By Richel Umel
Inquirer Mindanao

LIGAN CITY—THE people of Dapitan City are preparing a grand welcome for former Zamboanga del Norte congressman Romeo Jalosjos, according to a town official.

Jalosjos, a convicted rapist serving time at the New Bilibid Prisons, was reportedly among those pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Malacañang had issued a denial about the report saying the convict was not among those considered for pardon.

Dapitan City councilor Apple Marie Agulong said they were not discouraged by the Malacañang clarification.

"We have no idea and [no] confirmation on the latest update on former congressman Jalosjos' absolute pardon this December but we do not have control over the Dapitanons' will and plans to celebrate," Agulong told the Inquirer by phone.

She said the former congressman could be home before Christmas.

"Dapitanons who love him are preparing for a grand homecoming [which could take place] before Christmas," Agulong said.

She added that it would be more elaborate than a fiesta celebration for the long-lost son of Dapitan City.

Fluid situation

When asked to comment on the town's preparations for his arrival, Jalosjos sent this text message to the Inquirer, "My situation is still fluid."

Jalosjos said the planned homecoming was different from the upcoming Hamtraro Festival.

The Hamtraro (swimming) festival, which is now on its second year, was created mainly to commemorate the life and works of Dr. Jose Rizal during his banishment in Dapitan from July 17, 1892 to July 31, 1896.

Agulong said this year's Hamtraro would feature, among others, the landing of a boat to Rizal's conveyance with Ferdinand Blumentritt.

Jalosjos authored the book, she said.

HÄFELE
FINDING BETTER WAYS
BIG STOCK CLEARANCE SALE 2
December 15 and 16, 2007 from 8am 'til 6pm
Up to 90% Discount on Furniture Fittings and Architectural Hardwares
For more details and inquiries, please call us at:
Häfele Phils. Inc. - Manila
Tel. (632) 681 5252 / 687 5354
Fax (632) 681 5241
Häfele Phils. Inc. - Cebu
Tel. (6332) 345 8818 / 345 8819
345 3633 / 345 3638 / 420 5863
Fax (6332) 345 8999

HÄFELE
FINDING BETTER WAYS
New Arrival!
German technology
HÄFELE ELECTRONIC LOCK
(HES, HA Series)
For residential and hotels
Introductory Discount
During our grand clearance sale
15 and 16th of December, 2007
For more details and inquiries,
please call us at:
Häfele Phils. Inc. - Manila
Tel. (632) 681 5252 / 687 5354
Fax (632) 681 5241

Animal rights groups, DOT to meet on sea park

By Maryjean C. Ordaz

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism (DOT) is set to meet with members of animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) to "better understand" the group's objection to the Manila Ocean Park, a marine tourist aquarium behind the Quirino Grandstand in Manila which opened this month.

"The regulation of environmental practices of enterprises such as the Manila Ocean Park actually fall under the jurisdiction and expertise of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)," Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said yesterday.

However, Durano said a meeting with Peta could shed light on why they vehemently object to the reclamation, a P2-billion project of the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) with Jorge Araneta and Makayatian Inc. investors.

"I admire their passion for marine protection and preservation," Durano said of the animal rights group.

He stressed that the DOT had been working with environmental groups such as the Tubbataha Sea Squadron in the Visayan Seas to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines and the Ramsay Ballesteros in Bataan, Sorsogon.

"We likewise practice the same; they are advocates too. What's important at this point is to determine whether the construction violated any environmental laws in the manner in which they secured their necessary permits," Ibana added.

The DOT secretary added that he would likewise encourage if the project has fully complied with the environmental requirements of the DENR.

In a letter to Dr. [illegible] Peta executive manager Jacinthe Rigodon said marine parks would only teach people that "it is acceptable to keep animals in captivity—buried, mutilated, lonely and far from their natural homes."

Peta also urged the public to express their opposition to the project and show their objection to keeping animals in captivity.

Manila Ocean Park vice president Cristina [illegible] earlier had said it clarified that the facility would promote the conservation and preservation of marine species, adding that they have been working closely with government agencies such as the DENR and the Department of Education (Deped).

Reminder

stressed that the reclamation will not hinder protected and endangered species such as whale sharks and other sea mammals.

She said a team of marine biologists and scientists have been working to make sure the fish species in one tank would live well with each other and in a natural ecosystem.

"We are very careful about the fish display. We are aware that we have a responsibility both to the public and the environment," Reminder said.

Metrobank told to pay P3.8B in taxes

By Michelle V. Ramos

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, has been ordered by the Court of Tax Appeals to pay the Bureau of Internal Revenue P3.79 billion in taxes that had accrued since the 1990s.

The liability arose from unpaid documentary stamp taxes and gross receipt taxes on special savings accounts.

Deputy Commissioner Gregorio Gelacio, head of the BIR's legal and inspection division, had earlier stressed the tax-collecting agency's resolve to collect back taxes to meet the government's goal of reducing the budget deficit.

The legal battle between the BIR and Metrobank stemmed from the creation of special savings accounts in the '90s.

Metrobank, as did the other banks, offered the accounts to clients seeking higher yields for with the convenience of being able to withdraw their money when they wanted.

Under the National Internal Revenue Code, time deposits, which earn higher interests, are subject to the documentary stamp tax (DST) but not ordinary savings accounts.

Special savings accounts have features of both ordinary and time deposit accounts. This was the reason Metrobank and the other banks gave for not paying the DST.

The BIR is also involved in court cases with other banks over the DST issue, but Metrobank had the biggest tax deficiency, it said.

The BIR said it expects its victory to be challenged by Metrobank.

Metrobank has filed a motion for reconsideration in the Court of Tax Appeals.

Legal remedies

"In any event, we are ready to avail of other legal remedies, including going to the Supreme Court, to finally resolve this industry issue," said Antonio Ty Cang Metrobank assistant corporate secretary, in a statement.

Metrobank noted it had complied with its tax obligations.

"Pending resolution of this matter, we would like to assure the public that through out its 45-year history, Metrobank has not been remiss in its responsibilities to the country, especially with regard to paying taxes," Ty Cang said.

He pointed out that in the last three years, the bank remitted P64.4 billion in national and municipal taxes. Last year alone, the bank paid P24.5 billion in taxes to the government, he said.

Earlier, Metrobank applied for amnesty under the recently enacted Tax Amnesty Law.

Under the law, individuals and companies with unpaid taxes or could apply for amnesty between Sept. 6 and March 5 next year. Applicants may pay an amnesty fee that would grant them immunity from prosecution.

The Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti said the BIR would not accept amnesty applications from Metrobank and other banks with DST deficiencies but would pursue their tax liabilities.

Wet Christmas seen

By TJ Burgonio

IT COULD BE A WET CHRISTmas this year, with "above normal" rains extending even up to the end of January, forecasters said on Tuesday.

Weathermen said the seasonal rainfall forecast till May next year is due to La Niña, a phenomenon characterized by the cooling of the surface of the Pacific Ocean. The increased moisture in the atmosphere is carried out west by the easterly winds.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) advised the public to brace for more flash floods, particularly in Petsay as the cold-inducing northeast monsoon (hanging) converges with the warm, moist air from the easterly Pacific winds.

"In areas where it's normal for it to have only rain during summer, it will rain this January," said weather specialist Jinky Ortega of the Pagasa Climate Information Monitoring and Prediction Center in accuweather.

"It could cause floods and landslides," elevated Pagasa, installing that the landslide in Guinsaugon, Leyte, that buried a village of 1,800 people was caused by rains brought by a "weak" La Niña.

La Niña this year was described as "moderately strong."

Above normal rain is expected over most parts of the country.

CHRISTMAS PACKAGE

Passage of GMA pet bills seen; amnesty for Reds to miss cut

By Christine D. Avendaño

WITH SIX SESSION DAYS TO go before Congress takes itself to Christmas break, its leaders and Malacañang agreed to work for the passage of nine priority measures like the 2008 national budget and the Cheaper Medicines Act but the proposed amnesty bill for communist rebels may not be passed for lack of time.

This came out of yesterday's Legislative-Executive Advisory Development Council (Ledac) meeting presided over by President Macapagal-Arroyo at which 15 measures were presented for consideration in the group's common legislative agenda.

In her opening statement, the President made known her preference for four measures—the P1.2 trillion national budget, the cheaper medicines bill, amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) and amnesty for communist rebels.

Epira amendment

"The budget will finance public services and debt servicing long [sought] by the people and business," Ms Arroyo said.

"The other [ones] the passage before Congress takes its break on Dec. 21 of the cheaper medicines bill that would further bring down the cost of medicines and amendments to the Epira so that electricity costs will also go down.

"We will also talk about the amnesty proclamation for communist rebels. Many of them want to return to the fold of the law, that's why we proclaimed an amnesty for them ... and we intend today like approval of Congress on this," Ms Arroyo said.

It looks like the President will get most of her wishes save for the rebel amnesty bill.

Not optimistic

The Ledac members who emerged from the nearly four-hour meeting said the six other measures that would likely be approved were the creation of the Civil Aviation Authority, a revision of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, amendments to the Magna Carta for Small and Medium Scale Industries, creation of the Credit Information System, establishment of the Personal Equity Retirement Account and amendments to the University of the Philippines charter.

While they agreed to work on passing the rebel amnesty bill, the lawmakers and Palace officials were not optimistic this would happen before the break.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued a presidential proclamation granting amnesty to members of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front in September. All it needs is the concurrence of the House and Senate.

Earlier, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said approval of the amnesty bill was high on the agenda of the Ledac meeting.

"There is a commitment to work out a bill down to a modest thrush.—are only here six session days left," Presidential

Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza told reporters.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said some senators had raised their concerns about the amnesty bill and he didn't think there would be enough time to approve it.

"The President is really moving for it but the problem [is] once the proclamation is issued, Congress can only express confirmity or reject it. It cannot amend it so what [we] can do is [to] persuade our colleagues to support the proclamation," Gonzalez said.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. said he was optimistic the amnesty measure may be passed "not later than January next year" because of "outstanding issues to be clarified."

He said the proclamation should explain certain concepts such as what constitutes a political offense, the amnesty's coverage and limiting for the amnesty to members of the rebel movement.

He said implementing rules and regulations were also needed.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said what needed removing was the "economic component of each and every" communist rebel, recalling himself of the amnesty proposals.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, however, said the Senate will try to pass the amnesty bill before Christmas.

"We're going to try and pass it before the break because it is a bigger that those rebel returnees should, by their in effect defection from the revolutionary cause, strengthen the situation in our country [that would] be reflected in our national economy next year," Santiago said.

Court grants Batasan suspect new probe

By Alilosi W. Lopez

A MANILA REGIONAL Trial Court judge postponed the arraignment of Batasan bombing suspect Hajarun Jamiri yesterday and granted the suspect's petition for a preliminary investigation after he claimed police had tortured him into making a confession.

Judge Virginia Alameda of Manila RTC Branch 38 said the arraignment would be postponed until the issue of probable cause was resolved by the Senate.

Jamiri, one of nine persons accused of involvement in the Nov. 13 bombing at the House of Representatives, had sought the preliminary investigation, complaining to the judge that aside from being tortured, he was the victim of a warrantless arrest on Nov. 19, and was denied a lawyer of his choice while in police custody.

Due on bail, the 40-year-old ex-member of Rahman Ramlan, who is cutted in a press conference on Monday his statements implicating former Sultan Bup. Ferdy Salapuddin, Amk. Mendanao Rep. Bhgy Matabaran and the latter's brother Ely in the bombing that killed five persons, including the alleged target, Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar.

Two of Jamiri's co-accused, Cailor Asmal and Adlhabi Bacom, also claimed they were severely tortured by police into signing confessions and implicating Salapuddin and the Matabaran brothers as the masterminds.

The nomination could spell the collapse of the case filed by the Philippine government before the Interpol and adds fire to accusations by government critics that police authorities are human rights abusers as well as incompetent investigators. With reports from Leila B. Salaverria and Christine O. Avendaño

GMA missed best option in 2005, Ramos claims

By Fe Zamora and Gema Pantaleon

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS said a shift from the presidential to a parliamentary system would have been the "best option" for change, but this option was no longer available today.

The change from presidential to parliamentary in 2006 would have removed President Macapagal-Arroyo and could have spared the country from more "suffering," said Ramos who delivered the keynote speech at the Press Foundation of Asia Forum on Ethics and Democracy at the Manila Hotel late Monday.

"That issue would have long been over," Ramos said in Filipino, referring to the sound off at the Manila Peninsula Hotel last Nov. 29 by ousted by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim purportedly to bring about change.

Ramos said he offered the formula for "constitutional renewal" at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal from June to August 2005, but his proposal was accepted and thrown aside.

The string of excerpts from an illegal wire tap, in which the President was allegedly recorded talking with an election commissioner about rigging her lead in the 2004 election results, resulted in the sudden resignation of 10 Cabinet members and senior officials on July 6, 2005.

Ramos and House Speaker Jose de Venecia came to the aid of Ms Arroyo, proposing an exit formula for her through a shift to a parliamentary system by way of constitutional amendments.

"The timeline for constitutional renewal should have been from August to December [2005]. There should have been a constituent assembly, senatorial elections by districts ... That would have been our first option because in the parliamentary system, we do not have the problem of the Senate being the prime mover in effecting regime change as what had happened here so many times in a presidential system," Ramos said. With reports from Norman Bordadora and Christine Avendaño

Printing We

PRINT TOWN

BDO

Credit Cards

The New iPod Nano, yours for FREE!

Get a BDO Gold MasterCard and get a FREE Apple iPod Nano 4GB.

Apply Now! Call 631-8000 or 1-800-10-6318000 (Domestic Toll-Free) or visit the nearest BDO branch or BDO On-site outlet.

See posters and flyers for details
Promo period: October 22, 2007 to March 22, 2008.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0000 Series of 2007.

We find ways

Power, water rates soar; P1 'pan de sal' is history

From page B1

wood spending of prices of wheat and flour.

No choice

Lorito Chavez, president of PFMI, said bakeries had no choice but to pass on the increase. But flour price increases of 6 percent last May mean heavy losses in the holiday season.

"We are no longer capable of lightening our belts any further or else we would have to close our businesses," Chavez said.

Industry data showed that the price of flour had risen steadily by at least 6 percent a month in the last six months at 25-kilogram bag rose P680 in July but now fetches P860.

Simplicio P. Umali Jr., president of PAMBAKING, said that an 11 percent flour price hike in October and 9 percent in November had not been fully reflected in the price of bread.

No relief in sight

Umali said that on top of this month's 6 percent price increase, bakers were going around their prices would go up again by 10 percent in January.

The industry groups said the global increase in wheat prices due to poor supplies was pulling up local prices of flour.

In the United States, which is the country's primary source of wheat, price increases have reached 70 percent with a rise in raw costs reaching $399 per ton in October compared to $224 a year before.

"Flour prices could have been higher if not for the continued appreciation of the peso against the dollar," Umali said.

He said domestic price hikes have also been passed on to flour-based products like noodles, sotanghon and snack foods.

According to the PFMI and PCBMI, most of the independent bakeries have given up on making pan de sal at P1 apiece a few months ago as they were forced to pack up the price to P1.50.

Power rates up, too

Consumers will experience a 6-centavos per-kilowatt-hour increase in electricity charges this month as Meralco passes on its recovery of purchased power costs from the month's before.

From P4.2525 per kWh in November, Meralco's generation charge went up to P4.4125 per kWh this month.

Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco explained, however, that the increase in the November generation charge component of electricity bills was not an actual rate increase, but was a result of the automatic generation rate adjustment (Agra) mechanism.

Under the Agra, distribution utilities such as Meralco are automatically allow generation and system loss charges once price approved from the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

"Every month, we get power from various generators. Naturally, the costs fluctuate for various reasons, such as fuel price, plant conditions...among others. So the average generation charge will move up or down," Francisco explained.

Rate adjustments

Despite the Agra's automatic nature, however, he said Meralco still had to submit to the ERC the figures that they would use for their generation-rate adjustments.

"We do submit those figures monthly to the ERC for them to check or validate. They are also on our website," he said.

What was still pending with the ERC, he said, were 10 petitions covering generation cost recovery from September 2006 to June 2007, the period when the ERC suspended the Agra scheme.

These under-recoveries would be taken as a separate entities this year, he said.

No recoveries would be made without prior approval from the ERC, at least for those 10 pending petitions, Francisco added.

Those without firm part of any Agra-related adjustments in the coming months.

Water rates follow

Apela-owned MWCI will increase water rates starting Jan. 1, 2008.

MWCI said it planned to increase the "average all-in tariff" to P39.84 a cubic meter from the current P30.54 a cubic meter.

The adjustment was necessary to cover additional capital expenditures in the next 15 years.

Average all-in tariff refers to the mean of all the tariffs and add-on rates related to MWCI's four customer types: Residential, semi-business, commercial and industrial.

Jesse Sevilla of MWCI Corporate Communications office said consumers would not individually bear the P14.38 per cu. hic meter increase.

"We are still waiting for the final resolution from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System as to how we will spread the rates among our customers—whether we will impose it at one time next year or spread it in the next few years," Sevilla said, adding that the water rates would be announced on Thursday or on Friday at the latest.

Staggered increases

He added that customers would be paying less than the P14 increase.

In a previous briefing, the MWSS Regulatory Office explained that the tariff increase would translate to an average increase of P1.67 in the monthly bill of residents who consume 30 cubic meters or an increase of P6.20 a day.

Say, you consume 30 cubic meters of water a month, your bill would increase to P526 from the old P333 you were paying.

Sevilla said the P6.20-a day hike was applicable if MWSS decided to impose the increase on a one-time basis for the next five years (2008 to 2012).

"But based on our public consultations, consumers would like increase to be staggered once the next five years, like what we did during our rate rebasing in 2003," he said.

Back in 2003, MWCI imposed a PY increase in two stages—a P5 increase in 2003 and a P4 increase in 2005.

MWCI president Antonino Aquino said the tariff increase was needed to ensure the reliability of water supply to the east zone and to enable the expansion of services in the next 15 years.

The planned water projects and investments are worth roughly P117 billion, he added.

"MWCI must prepare for the increase in consumption, effects of natural calamities and compliance with the Clean Water Act. To do so, major investments are needed to ensure 24-hour water supply," Aquino said.

These investments include Putatan water treatment plant, the Angat Dam, where Metro Manila sources 97 percent of its water supply, as well as the continuous repair, rehabilitation and laying down of pipelines to avoid leaks and aggressive expansion of wastewater program.

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE: Before starting the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, President Arroyo says a prayer. From left, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, Senator's Miguel Zubiri, Gregorio Honasan, Juan Ponce Enrile and Panfilo Pangilinan, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

Transco bidding on today; judge dismisses TRO

From page B1

chiman, La Costa Development Corp., had failed to prove that "great or irreparable injury" would result in the meantime that the court had not decided on its petition for a writ of preliminary injunction.

La Costa, headed by nickel mining magnate Antonio Eustaquio and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, is the only financial group left in today's bidding by Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China—is identified with the group of Razon. Its vice-chairman of the administration is Unity to the May unnamed elections and is close to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jamby Madrigal have denied Gokongwei's bidding affecting conflict of interest because Razon is an official in Razon's corporate board. Razon heads International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI).

Madrigal has also claimed that a brother of Gokongwei Jr. Lucio Gokongwei Jr., has an interest in Monte Oro. She has urged the Senate blue ribbon committee to investigate the sale, asserting it's "fishing malaise" or a done deal.

Thereto yesterday said only an order from the Supreme Court could stop today's bidding, pointing out that this is provided for under the Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act 9184).

"Barring such an order from the Supreme Court, given that all preparations are in place, there is no reason to stop the Transco bidding," he said in a statement.

Thereto also said that another issue that one of the bidding groups—the consortium of San Miguel Corp., Seattle Holdings Corp. and Terna-Interelectrica Nacional-Sam of Italy—did not have a 60-percent Filipino ownership "was not a hindrance to today's auction.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has issued separate legal opinions confirming that the pre-qualified bidders for the Transco concession all met the Filipino nationality requirement for the operation of the 25-year Transco concession.

Thereto said the SEC's Office of the General Counsel had confirmed that each of the groups' proposed structure and equity investments met the ownership requirement for grantees of a public utility franchise.

"We are hopeful that the confirmation from the SEC as to the nationality of the bidders will put to rest all issues about their qualification. This is just more reason for us to push through with the Dec. 12 bidding," he said.

Approval strategy

He also reiterated that what PSALM would be bidding out are the right to operate, maintain and expand Transco through a concession agreement, and not the Transco assets themselves.

"This is the strategy approved by the President as early as five years ago, and the amendment of this privatization mode is affirmed by the consortium...even increasing...interest from potential bidders," Thereto said.

Because the Makati RTC has decided to continue hearing La Costa's application for the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction, La Costa has not given up on its fight against alleged foul play surrounding the Transco privatization.

"The maintenance of the TRO to allow us to take part in the bidding does not deem our judicial remedy," said La Costa legal counsel Napoleon Pelaldan.

Injunction hearing goes on

The hearing on the petition for the writ of preliminary injunction was continued yesterday and may be resume next week, Pelaldan said.

"The trial court can stop the implementation of the bidding at any of its subsequent stages. We will also go to the Supreme Court to question the order of the trial court denying our TRO application. The SC has the legal authority to reverse the bidding and all its effects," he said.

La Costa said it was willing to bid for the Transco concession for as much as $6 billion, or double the base bid price during the last failed bidding on Friday. It said that PSALM's privatization, bidding and awards committee's (PBAC) disqualification of the consortium was a crime under the antigraft law.

PBAC had disqualified La Costa because it was not satisfied that La Costa Development Corp., as the Philippine member of the consortium, had the ability to fund an equity investment of at least $100 million.

But La Costa, which tapped SNC-Lavalin of Canada as its foreign technical partner, said it had fully complied with the bidding procedures and proved its capability to fund the required equity investment.

A crown jewel

Transco has been described as one of the government's "crown jewels." With Transco's power transmission grid and fiber optic cables, the winner of the auction could also become a powerful player in the telecommunications industry with its own broadband backbone network.

Madrigal said the holding of the bidding today would be a "victory for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cronies."

Pimentel said the government had failed to answer the basic question of how it could possibly ensure a fair auction with Razon's stated Razon's payroll.

Erap ready to make up with GMA but will fight Charter change

From page B1

for Erap Luis "Chavit" Singson.

But that, Estrada said, he would stop being a member of the opposition.

"In a democracy, there's always the opposition. We will continue to be the check and balance," he said.

But when asked to explain his reasons for forgiving Ms. Arroyo and Singson, whom he said he formerly had accused of engineering his fall from power in 2001, Estrada turned positively sullen.

"I have said time and again that the Holy Spirit put into my mind and my heart that in life peacefully, forget all the good things you did to others and for get the bad things that others did to you. That is why I am living peacefully now.

"I've been reminded by the Lord's Prayer that we should forgive."

But the reason not done fighting.

3 proposals

Estrada took on a fighting stance in reaction to reports that members of the House of Representatives were preparing to deliberate on at least three proposals to amend the Constitution.

He promised to fight the ir ers administration which had pardoned him if it would push for the amendment of the 1987 Constitution to pave the way for a shift from the presidential to the parliamentary form of government.

"I will fight it. I will lead the rallies against it," Estrada declared in an interview at the exhibition of a luncheon hosted by one of his sons, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, to thanksgiving for being chosen by the Philippine Azkoven as one of The Outstanding Young Men for public service.

It was an award that Estrada himself received 35 years ago.

Estrada said he was against Charter change because a would "deprive the poor of the chance to choose their own president."

He said the right to directly elect the leader of the country was the great equalizer between the rich and the poor. And if the administration pe sists in changing the form of government and taking away the right, "then will surely be chaos," he said.

Estrada, who was convicted of two counts of plunder in September and pardoned in October, stopped short of saying that the Charter change initiatives indicated Ms. Arroyo's desire to hold on to power beyond 2010, when her term ends and the new presidential election is scheduled.

But he said the administration—allies, even enemy said, were convinced to the most corrupt (see humor story on Page A11 yet—was lucky because Filipinos serve "patrons."

Mayor Ejercito echoed his father's remarks on forgiving Ms Arroyo et al., but said his family would not forget their "sins."

"We can forgive the person, but we should not forget the sins so that these will not happen again," he said.

Ejercito also said the opposition would fight tooth and nail against Charter change moves in the House.

He voiced the opposition's long-held stance that the initiatives were geared to "prolong" Ms Arroyo's hold on the presidency.

Ejercito said the administration should not tax the people's patience by pushing for Charter change.

He said that if the administration, backed by cronies, continues to do so, this could lead to Ms Arroyo's ouster.

"Everything has its limits. The people will protest if the abuses continue," he said.

Overwhelming clamor

The committee on constitutional amendments chaired by La Union Rep. Victor Ortega, a member of the ruling Lakas-CMD, will focus on House Concurrent Resolutions Nos. 3, 4, 6, 8 and No. 7 authored respectively by Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Antonino and Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco.

The three resolutions call for a constitutional convention to propose amendments to the Charter and to provide for the election of delegates in November 2009 to coincide with the barangay elections.

According to Amante's resolution, there is an "overwhelming clamor among the majority of our people" to amend the Constitution "to make it more responsive to the new millenium and to meet the needs of the Filipino people."

Alfelor, Amante and Cuenco are members of the ruling coalition, which includes Lakas and Ms Arroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

House Bills No. 1762 and No. 1876, authored by Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. and Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin, respectively, also call for a constitutional convention.

Atienza, Indonesian president tackle conservation of Coral Triangle

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY LITO Atienza met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Bali last Monday to discuss measures to sustain the conservation of the Coral Triangle, considered the world's center of marine biodiversity.

In broad geographical terms, the Coral Triangle is believed to be located within an area centered around Eastern Indonesia, encompassing four countries: Indonesia, Australia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea, according to a 2003 report from The Nature Conservancy, Southeast Asia Center for Marine Protected Areas in Bali, Indonesia.

Atienza said the meeting was a good opportunity for Manila and Jakarta to tackle issues on how to protect and sustain the management of the marine area.

Issues on marine area

He, however, did not specify exactly what measures the two countries would undertake.

"Like all other ecosystems, our marine areas, including the coastal and all biodiversity that are found on it are also vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change," Atienza said in a statement.

"The Coral Triangle, which is known to contain more than 500 species of reef-building corals, is also abundant in reef fish species, such as yellow fin tuna, big-eye tuna, humpback parrot fish and Napoleon wrasse," he said.

LITO ATIENZA

Highest human population

It also supports some of the world's highest human population densities, and its countries contain more than 120 million people, he added.

Atienza is in Bali, Indonesia as head of the Philippine delegation to the 13th Session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 3rd Meeting of Parties of the Kyoto Protocol.

Lory Tan, vice chairman of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines, had said that the Coral Triangle would eventually serve as a major source of food for countries beyond the region. Issues, the need for is sustainable management.

'Coral Triangle'

"The Coral Triangle is going to be the food factory of the world. From this part of the world, China, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Europe, Hawaii, and the United States would buy their fish," Tan said.

"This part of the world will produce the seaweed, the shellfish, crabs and shrimp that will feed the world. So there's an opportunity here to sustainably manage this," he added.

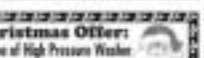
Atienza said the Philippines would call for the setting up of an Adaptation Fund to assist highly vulnerable countries on how to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change.

The secretary said that countries in the region shared common problems on the devastating impact of climate change like flood, mass drownage, dry season and the destruction of marine resources.

LCD PROJECTOR FOR RENT

6999 FREE PLANE TICKETS BORACAY
LOWEST PEAK-SEASON RATE

IWATA TIME RECORDER



Panasonic
PABX Telephone Systems
• Call Transfer
• Music-On-Hold
• Call Privacy
• Intercom
893-9073 to 77

JOB

Merry Christmas Offer:
Most Complete Line of High Pressure Washer & Vacuum Cleaner at the Best Prices!

P39,500

Give us jobs, Rapu Rapu folk challenge militants

LEADERS AND residents of Rapu Rapu in Albay yesterday challenged militant groups to help the poor mining community and create jobs should they succeed in getting Lafayette's polymetallic project on the island closed down.

"These militants are risking our future and our lives in the name of the environment. Their real adversary is to keep us poor and desperate and we all know why. And they get paid for what they do," the residents said in a joint press statement.

The joint statement was signed by barangay chairmen, councilors and residents, who said the militants and even some Church people had resorted to lying to cause the publ ic of non-existent disasters they blame on the project.

Militant mining groups led by Greenpeace have opposed the mining project in the area. A commission, headed by then Ilonggan Bishop Arnigo Fes ves, said mining spills had contaminated coastal areas with mercury and other toxic chemicals, diminishing la cal fishermen's catch and causing skin disease among some of the residents.

But allegations of mercury contamination were never substantiated and even declared a "hoax" by supporters of the mining operation.

"It is not true that there was a fishkill in Pagcolbon, where the project is, and in neighboring barangays. I live here and I can tell you we had a perfectly normal life until those outsiders started telling the world we had a fishkill," said the press statement quoting Pagcolbon resident Antonio Ibias.

"The world believed these lies because Rapu Rapu is so remote that there was no immediate survey of the area. But if only people can come and see for themselves, including the priests who prefer to just cater to the comfort of Legazpi City, they would realize they are actually putting at risk our present and our future with our step limits," he was quoted as saying.

Militants associated with rapp kis, Gabriela, Bayan, and other groups have camped out in a park in Legazpi City to ask for the closure of the project because of the opposed fishkill.

Government reports, however, have ruled out the project as the cause of a supposed fish kill, which is more than 10 kilometers away.

10
Canon

THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO COMPRESS YOUR DOCUMENTS.

Philippine Daily Inquirer

OPINION

Gore's challenge

FEW POLITICIANS GET TO ENJOY A SECOND LIFE, and fewer still get to make the transition from politics to statesman while out of power. Yet that's been the good fortune, for himself and the world, of Al Gore. As co-recipient with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize and gave a ringing endorsement to People Power. According to him, People Power has begun to develop into a truly global movement, with the environment as its motive force.

EDITORIAL

Gore said that the international environmental movement will be even more formidable than the nuclear-freeze movements of the 1970s and 1980s. And in light of his assertion, we need only point to examples here and close to home, of how citizens have pressured their governments on their environmental scores.

Here at home, the proposed Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) was almost stymied when it ran aground on environmentalists' objections. Forcing the Philippine and Japanese governments to replace the gray areas in the text of the proposed agreement with explicit re-commitments to entering international agreements on hazardous wastes. In a recent provincial forum, one student, apart from perceptions of apathy among the younger generation, said it isn't true at all, but talking about political rights is old-fashioned, while concern for the environment is a truly vital cause.

It may be that what Gore and that student have begun to explore is that environmentalism is the new political activism, because it involves a fundamental sense of community interests and challenging officialdom if it won't see it that way. In Australia, the hard-line skewed administration was swept out of office on a tide of repugnance for his strong-arm methods and, in particular, his contempt for the environment. Immediately upon his assumption to office, new Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced that his country would finally sign the Kyoto Protocol.

But there remain two outposts backing the global trend—the United States and China. Both are patently hostile to international public opinion, particularly if it affects their economic ambitions and insatiable thirst for the resources that make possible unbridled consumption.

UN officials have proposed cutting carbon-dioxide emissions by 40 percent, the cobbling together of a new "roadmap" to maintain the momentum of efforts to curb global warming, and the continuation of the hard work required to come up with a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012. Investments in alternative forms of energy need to be encouraged, too, as nations begin to grapple with the unforeseen costs of putting all their eggs in the biofuels basket. For every hectare of agricultural land devoted to biofuels, there's one hectare unable to produce food; global food prices have begun to spike as a result.

In Bali, a showdown is expected between global spinners and the domestic interests of the Americans and the Chinese. The United States announced that it would continue to oppose specific targets for emission-cutting for countries. China pleaded that it must continue its nation of development and not have its hands tied by environmental considerations, though it, too, has begun to spiritually invest in alternative fuels and in greener buildings and developments.

While back the United States and China will probably remain intransigent in Bali, there is some hope on the horizon. Whether that hope will merely be an aspiration or a political reality, however, lies in large part on Gore himself. If he sees global People Power in terms of the environmental cause, he has a large role to play to ensure that it manifests itself in his country. He has received praise for stubbornly staying on message, in environmental terms. He has taken himself out of the 2008 presidential race to no small part, because he wants to maintain a kind of moral ascendancy in that regard.

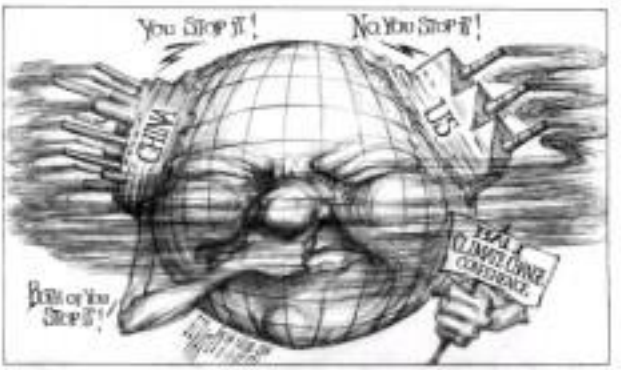
We can only hope that as a statesman, he inspires American voters to make the environment a central issue in the coming presidential elections. It can help restore the US image as a major force in global cooperation, instead of the rogue state that in many ways it has become since George W. Bush took office.

Publisher **Isaac Tarriela**
Editor in Chief/Executive Vice President **Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc**
Managing Editor **Jose Ma. D. Hilario**
Associate Editor **Nelia Alcid V. Gualberto**
Associate Editor for Readership **Rolando A. Carmelino**
Opinion Editor **Juan P. Mata**
News Editors **Dennis J. Chanco Jr.** • Chief Copy Desk Supervisor **Nina R. Nemeño**
Chief News Page Desk **Rosalie M. Alvarez-Ong**
Assistant Editor **Francisco E. Benavente Jr.**
Senior Desk Editor **Jose V. Sandoval Jr.**
Editorial Consultant **Antonio Zumel**
Chief Photographer **Ernesto Sandoval**
Art & Design Director **Lenore G. Velasco**

Board Chairman **Hermes R. Pedro**
President **Alejandro Pedro Roces Jr.**
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing **Rosario R. Bautista**
Vice President for Finance **Felix R. Glaria**
AVP for Circulation **Lamberto S. Ty**

Readers' Advocate **Elvira Oscar Tirol**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.



Hail to the Chief for saving a housemaid

"I THINK I'M A PRETTY GOOD ECONOMIST but a very bad politician," President Macapagal-Arroyo said a group of British investors, unashamedly patting herself on the back.

That statement is both true and false. True: "You're very bad politician." False: "I think I'm a pretty good economist," the thought wrong.

The politician part speaks for itself, but she has to be told the truth on the economic part. The main plug-in to the claim that the Philippines has a "strong economy" is the modernization and expansion of the arms against the dollar. The peso-dollar exchange rate is going up not because the peso is strong but because the dollar is weak. The dollar is sinking against all currencies but the peso is not rising against all other currencies but the dollar rate is going up not because the Philippine economy is strong, but because the utilitarian economy overseas. Filipino workers are sending home the dollars they earn abroad. It's a case of supply and demand. More money (the OFW remittances) and less dollars (because we still like our imports). Our economy is being kept afloat by the blood, sweat and tears of our OFWs.

Filipinos are working abroad in greater numbers not because of a policy to encourage them by the government. They are forced to go abroad because there are no jobs for them here. If they do not make sacrifices and leave their families while they work abroad, they would starve to death.

If our economy is healthy, there would be plenty of jobs here, and the wages and salaries would be comparable to those of other countries with healthy economies like Filipinos who are already employed are forced to work abroad because their pay is not enough to support their families. The only people making a good living are the top officials in the Arroyo administration. They will always make a good living whether the economy is good or bad.

In a good economy, everybody would be employed, everybody would have enough to eat, and everybody would live in decent houses. Have one look at all these squatter colonies and at the unemployment rate and you know that something is very bad in the Philippine economy. How much is that one? (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)

Please note much lower the debt-to-GDP administration of Presidents Marcos, Aquino, Estrada—even that of Ramos. And I don't mean only in the—of that we import less than the first, we—clothes and from there we grow and the fish that we catch. In fact, home-grown agriculture products and domestic fish are more expensive than imported ones. Which means the Arroyo administration cannot even sustain our agriculture and fishery.

If GMA learned anything in the school of economics, it should have learned that in a nation with a healthy economy everybody would be prosperous, there would be no poor people. But about half of our population considers themselves poor, millions have little or no land, and young people in the province commit suicide because of poverty.

In the same time that young Arroyo is destroying the Arroyo administration is distributing half-million peso brand-new houses to the poor. Which is very encouraging—if the guys with bundles of "equally bad politicians" with the poor Filipino taxpayers footing the bill.

* * *

DILG deserves praise for making a delegation to Kuwait on her own home from Luneta to personally see our OFWs, Marilou Barrera, from executive.

This reminds me of another OFW, and another President who could have saved her but didn't. The Sagkay Pact Contemplation was scheduled to be executed in Singapore while President Fidel V. Ramos was on one of his numerous junkets (FVR is the most traveled Filipino president, with Gloria trying to catch up).

There was a distinct at home for the President to make a side-trip to Singapore and save the life of a domestic helper from the gallows. But FVR preferred to thought it was beneath his dignity to plead for a mere housemaid. So he went straight home and did not pass by Singapore. Had he done that, who knows, Contemplation may still be alive—instead of Flor Contemplacion, who was saved by Ambassador Lea Salonga, whose GMA fired as chief judge of the labor court.

But FVR did not take the sensible, and Contemplation was sacrificed, a bloody kiss on the Ramos administration.

* * *

But there is one other big question mark in GMA's peace trip. The Spanish government gave her an award for "preserving human rights in her country."

What? What on earth did they do that? If they wanted to flatter her, they could have given an award for some other thing, say, to a teller of tall tales. But for human rights? Are the Spaniards incredibly stupid? Give a "human rights award" to a President dealing with an insurgency who shoots your leaders and other citizens have been killed or disappeared than in the whole 20 years of Marcos' martial law? Very few of the murderers have been arrested, prosecuted, or jailed. Human activists like a whistleblower Jun Pala are killed in Cebu.

Filipinos can't even march to Mendiola without being bludgeoned by policemen and feared by firemen. Journalists are so dis- dent pile of reporting an impending massacre at a five-star hotel (co-arranged, controlled and rule- ate to a military camp. The murderers are prevented from testifying in investigations by the senate. Suspects and detainees are taken out by policemen and shot down like animals and the police claims they were killed in shootouts. Do we still dare to human rights award that the Spaniards should honor with an award?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Death march

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I JUST RETURNED MY DVD OF "VIVA ZAPATA!," a movie starring Marlon Brando, written by the formidable John Steinbeck (based on historical) Zapatista that way.

It is January, 2000, a group of elite poor peasants has sought an audience with their president, Porfirio Diaz. Their complaint is that a plantation has taken over their land and leased them off, destroying their way and planning sugar instead. "Can you prove that these are your lands, my children?" Diaz asks. The peasants produce documents dating back to the Spanish Crown and the Mexican Republic. "If this is true," says Diaz, "you have no problem, the court will settle this." He offers his personal secretary to help them and assures himself saying he has other matters to attend to, it is not easy being president, particular- ly one who has been in office 34 years.

As the pressures file away, Zapata steps behind and tells the president, "Do you know of any land out that was won by country people?" Diaz will tells: "These things take time. You must be patient." Zapata replies: "With your permission, Mr. President, we make our no-tillas with corn, our irish potatoes."

Realizing came out of the peasants' plea and Zapata went on to lead a land revolt in Morelos, eventually joining Pancho Villa in fighting as four libertad.

I remembered the opening of "Viva Zapata!" in light of the Stanilaus farmers stooping to blackmailing to petition their grandeur to help them in their land problems. The parallels are uncanny, and they are small echoes of Zapata's commentary on our situation today. The only difference between the two scenes is that Diaz had the grace to receive his "children" if only to humor them, while the Stanilaus folks' presidents, such as they are compelled to call her so, was too busy receiving a medal in Spain for human rights to see them. And her minions in Malacañang were too busy rendering their pork, or lame, for Christmas to bother with them.

While at this, subset's dear frustrates with Spain honoring GMA for her contributions to human rights, and rights in the eve of International Human Rights Day? Its sheer mockery that goes over beyond their US War President George Bush's unofficial "Medal of Valor" for his effort- ence to democracy. The specific reason for Spain's award to GMA, which a fact she has idealized the death penalty, doesn't make things better, but makes for diabolical irony. I know the Spanish ambassador in his a decency follows and therefore must refrain from saying what he thinks enough to desist from committing a humongous boo- boo. The award mocks the spirit of bilgod in Cervantes, the man who birthed the word "quixotic," after which the Spanish colonial era is named. It offers only ironic comparison at the time in this country when the friars pretend themselves to the embodiment of God's truth and justice. While spanning that divinely ora- torgatorio phrase, "no more indio ..."

But to get back, the only difference between the two scenes is that Diaz received his unjustly gotten and GMA did not. Otherwise, they are nearly identical. Like the Morelos peasants, the Stanilaus folk have been driven off their land by a large landowners. Like the Morelos peasants, the Stanilaus farmers can't plant their land with rice and corn, they are bound off from it by barbed wire and armed guards, and can't prove the land is theirs. Like the Morelos peasants, the Stanilaus farmers' ability to wrest court cases even if they had the times invaded proof of ownership is zero to nothing, as anyone as shown by the fact that they did lose it, notwithstanding that previous Agrarian Reform Secretary Butch Abad is outside the land is theirs by law, by God and by justice.

Like the Morelos peasants, the Stanilaus farmers will probably have to deal with the same problem for 34 years—unless they and their companions do something about it.

If the Stanilaus farmers have done anything in their long march (it began way back in October), it is only to do the same several things.

One is that this country hasn't bargain' less the most enthusiastic. It has crept back to the old one. The two nations, the Morelos peasants and the Stanilaus farmers, are utterly historical except that the one happened on the cusp of the 20th century and the other on the cusp of the 21st. They are one century apart. The most nagging thing to face is that we should be having those problems at this late date, showing how the "democratic divide" between rich and poor, much of it owing to entitlements on the part of the many, which came to replace Filipino "noblesse oblige" after 1946 emerged 1950s, hasn't closed, is an indictment.

Two, is to highlight even more the cruel irony of that simple cry "Feed the rich, Turn their no-vendors on," to suggest that Filipinos have been living in the wrong country. Filipinos can now unite feel the change in their lives, but that is not in the direction of improvement. "We don't want food," a Stanilaus murderer cried angrily as the relief goods that were their way "we want land." It's an awkward way to put it, of course, but it's not hard to catch its meaning. We've heard it before in other ways: "We don't want fish, we want the means to catch fish." "We don't want charity, we want justice."

I don't know which one makes the air more stifling, the cry of the Stanilaus farmers to nowhere or the slipping into oblivion of Marcelino Ampar Bandara as variation on my—gloria or Gloria?

There is to put the stamps of Filipinos' and farmers' and workers' humiliation on more' needs into its side, one as unconventional as the means of solving things and the other a perfectly legal and peaceable way of doing no one an injustice ends in change things and the other a pe- ture must to me as it is to do that and remember:

Injustice can trade with coin, not with justice.

Man or monster?

WORLD VIEW

Patricia Rocco

BEFORE DAWN—THE APPEARANCE OF THE first former Khmer Rouge leader before a special hybrid court established in Cambodia to bring some measure of justice to the country's bloody regime. Indicted a quarter-century ago for crimes against humanity, Kaing Guek Eav, commonly known as "Duch," is expected to enter a plea of guilty to charges that he oversaw the deaths of more than 14,000 people at S-21, a former Phnom Penh high school turned into a torture center. He is one of five senior Khmer Rouge leaders who will be made to answer for their roles during the Pol Pot's genocide, in which an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians perished. Until recently, Duch was the only one imprisoned, after being captured in 1999.

The court, with its improbable blend of Cambodian and foreign judges and attorneys as well as victims, is meant to be a model for judicial reform and independent justice in a country where impunity has long been the rule. The first trial called judges who preside over the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia the cribunal's effort to balance the final atrocity of Duch's relentless torture, his dry questions they ask now considering betrays as much as the pain of Cambodia as it tries to the cause. Should mass murderers be afforded the same rights as everyone else?

One of the issues has a symbolic opening on the lawyer. Khmer Rouge soldiers bore her father to death, and the interrogators bring close at he upon by communist cadres as she and dozens of other prisoners stretched up a monument. She now wants to know why Duch, who admitted to these crimes, has the

Sermons against corruption

LETTERS

I BELIEVE THAT THE BISHOPS HAVE are done enough in attending to the morals of their flock. On the matter of illegal gambling, for example, I have never heard any sort of clerics or cleric person preaching on the hateful sin engaging in illegal gambling is, in fact, engaging in the devil's work.

The main thing goes with Gilbert and mention because these are words of evil as well. The problem is that the bishops sometimes even condone the poor's participation in illegal gambling, bribery, violence and even smuggling—after all, they are poor and deprived. To the middle class, the bishops do not preach the sinfulness of bribery and lengthy turnout, the flock learn how to compromise because everybody else is supposed to be corrupt.

I have never heard a sermon about the hard-line view that the buck stops with "me," the individual; in a way, the individual Catholic, who can separate corruption one of our country if only we refuse to give a dollar or to submit to petty and large-scale extortion. The problem is that our religious leaders have not emphasized enough to us that righteousness and condemning corruption have also a "price." In return, you become hailing in fact in a government office, or running for the light—to save grace before meeting us, or losing a fair because you dared to be the offender who mattered.

Our people have to hear from the moral leaders, in very strong words that government corruption is evil; yes, that sends go to hell because of bribery, extortion and corruption. Anything short of those words will not do us one good because our people will not realize the urgency and gravity of the situation.

—LUIS COLOM,
gawain@yahoo.com

Complaint remained unacted upon by BEAD

I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THAT RE-cruitment out-sign and complacency still exist in government offices when it comes to complaints from ordinary citizens. Note that yearly awards are given by the Civil Service Commission to officials and employees for supposedly outstanding performance. No wonder if the attention process of outstanding government officials and employees satisfies the criteria set for the purpose, considering that some unsolved and pending cases are easily have been put-up to the backseat of government.

Acting on my Jan. 21, 2005 letter-complaint against a milk manufacturing company, Prof. Leticia Barbara B. Gatchalian, director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, in her Feb. 16, 2005 first endorsement, directed Director Nestor F. Santiago Jr. of the Center for Health Investigations 3, (apparently to investigate my complaint. Instead, he treated a copy of their memo on employees whom he directed to see me on April 26, 2005. But Evangelista T. Lozada, head of the unit, merely asked me if I wanted a dialogue with the milk manufacturer, an offer which I rejected.

However, I reiterated my request that an investigation be conducted on the quality control system of the milk manufacturer, to ascertain with the compliance. Seven months thereafter, and almost a year since I called the attention of the company through letters, the first, on Nov. 15, 2006; and the second, on Dec. 27, 2006) after finding collateral and dirt inside its canned milk products, nothing has been heard from the said unit of the results of the investigation has been given to me.

The dilemma for consumer affairs, haggage it, besides, in his letter of Jan. 25, 2006, said he referred my letter-complaint to the regional director of the BFAD operations in its San Pedro Laguna plant. For investigation. Did my complaint die a natural death? Or is the government afraid to investigate its cronies?

—GEORGINA G. PEÑAFLOR SR.,
37 Rizal Street,
Barangay Concepcion Uno,
Sta4, Concepcion Norte, 4600

True appreciation of sea life cannot happen in shopping malls

WHAT'S MISSING FROM ALL THE hoopla about the opening of the Manila Ocean Park is the critical question of removing 300 marine animals from their ocean homes and confining them to tanks for the rest of their lives. Dolphins may be anatomically distressed by sheer amazing fish and marine mammals, but the animals are paying with their freedom to satisfy our curiosity.

A true understanding and appreciation of sea life cannot come from looking at bored animals trapped in artificial environments. Officials brag about providing 11,000 cubic meters of habitat, but this is a tiny amount of space compared to the billions of cubic meters of ocean where these animals belong.

People will go to the new complex to shop and eat, so no one will leave with a newfound respect for sea life. Open the gates, and let the animals go back home.

—JENNIFER TIGAS,
campaign coordinator,
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals–Asia-Pacific,
AsiaDirect@PETTreatsPacific.com

Blind to reigning anarchy

TO QUOTE FLORENCIO B. DE LOYOLA, "THE demand for the resignation of President Arroyo—in the aftermath "coronation" anarchy"—espoused by Jaime Cardinal Sin and by then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, et al., when they spawned the legitimacy-ducted President Joseph Estrada in atomic Ghetto Bangsagad design.

Before it seems that the "Marcosian style" rule of the illegitimate Palace occupant, Macapagal, at least, was twice elected by the people, Surrey in the anarchy under this regime that implements unilaterally the laws under circumstances of incoherents truth.

And what good things have been achieved in the field of economy that (1) adds to the ranks of the poor the overseas Filipino workers who are the value of their dollars reduced to billion 20 pesos—from $1:P50 to $1:P43, starving persons of rising prices? (2) Enlarges the gap between the haves and the have-nots? And what good things have been achieved in international diplomacy where the Philippines is globally perceived (2) To be in flagrant violation of human rights? (2) To be seen among the most corrupt nations in Asia and around the world?

If (was) outstanding the resignation: (as called by-epic, then, those who cannot see the present anarchy are either blind or numb or in a coma or in a region-in-coma.

—AURORA SIEL,
aurora_siel@yahoo.com

'Rape analogy' in bad taste

THIS IS IN REACTION TO A.M. TAYAG'S LET-ter, which appeared in the Nov. 29 issue of the Inquirer. Tayag may know something about Comrade de Quiroz writing but he knows little about rape.

Tayag wrote in part, "the better to fully savor the pleasure of being raped." There is no pleasure in being raped. Rape is always a crime, whether or not it is treated as such by a legal system. Even simple-hearted can an anorexic unwanted rape is consistently held to be part of Philippine culture, or any culture, which defines "manliness." Many men have set very exact about the rape of women, so much so that women, too, are conditioned to downplay the horror.

Rape is done by men who are threatened by women. The criminal rapes a woman to feel power and control over a woman. A rapist doesn't necessarily rape the woman who arouses him. A rapist accuses a woman who he views cannot physically fend him off. Rape is always a cowardly crime.

A woman being raped is like a man being forcibly sodomized. Has Tayag ever heard of a man who "savors the pleasure of being" forcibly sodomized?

—EVELYN DE GUZMAN,
4878 Gilmore Street,
Bo. Landayan

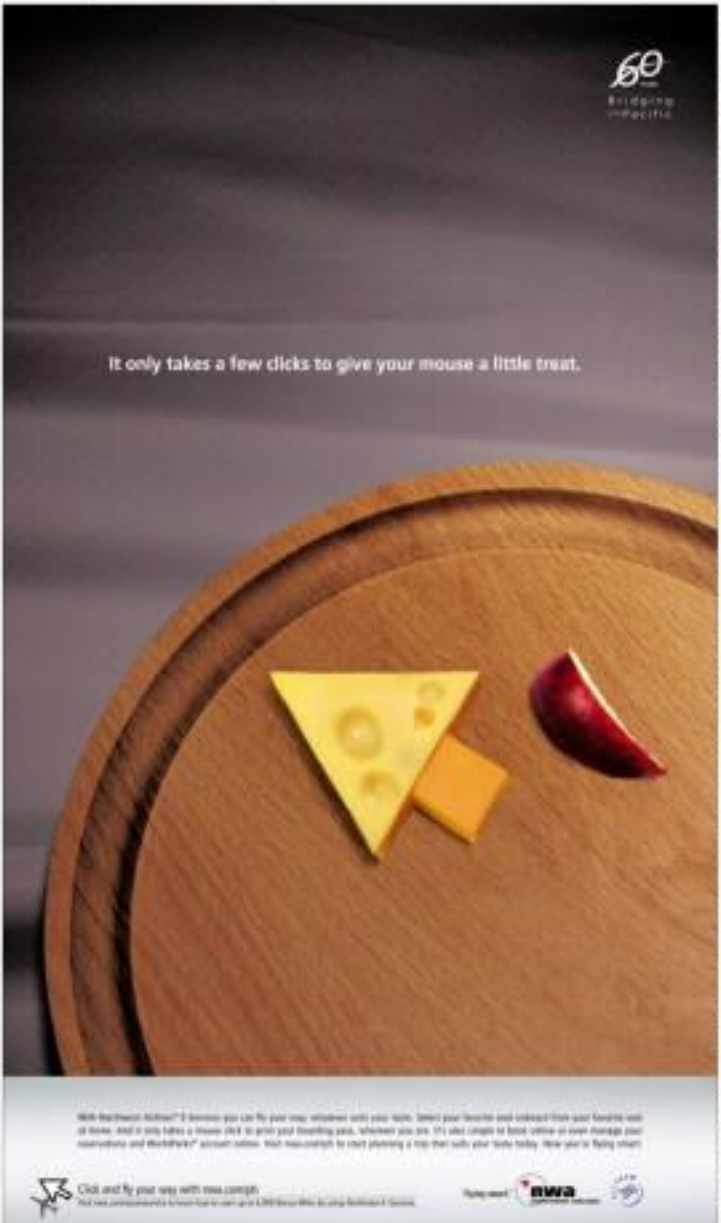
Monsod's 'return' hailed

THIS IS IN REACTION TO SOLITA MONSOD'S column titled "The hatchet criminal against GMA" (Inquirer, 11/26/07) for a while I thought we've lost the evident keeping silence on Granada against Rhizaul Garcia. After the report came out regarding the shooting Garcia had with Imperial commission, there was a deafening silence on GMA issues. (To be fair with Monsod, we would like to clarify that she's missing was held on Aug. 30, 2007. Reserve The true Gracia was here missed Monsod's logic. I column—Ed.)

As a dismissed employee with an experience of three years (and still counting) of anti-cop on apple against low oppressive policies and administration, the silence offer a disappointment with Garcia is not only hostility. We are here "turned more than many times." And each time we do, it look like death.

I mean no ill feelings to the professor. As a matter of fact, I wish to thank her for taking a share of our burden in the government service. Truly, her courage and conviction inflame and stimulate. Other writers should learn from her a lesson or two about fearless journalism.

—ROWENA THERESE GRACIA,
rtg177@yahoo.com



Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Drafts of pact with MILF prepared

COTABATO CITY—GOVernment and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) negotiators have already drafted a final peace agreement that could be signed next year, a source privy to the peace talks told the Inquirer.

The source, who requested anonymity for lack of clearance to talk on the subject, yesterday said the draft would be finalized after the negotiating panels meet for the last round of the exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur in February.

Gadhafi use

The drafting of the pact could be a sign that the two sides were a step away from entering into an agreement. Another was the expected arrival of the son of Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi to help testify the MILF and its rival group, the Moro National Liberation Front.

According to the source, the draft agreement provides for the expansion of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to cover Muslim-dominated villages in Central and Western Mindanao.

A law would be passed to repeal Republic Act (RA) 9054 and 9054 that would result in the dissolution of the existing ARMM.

RA 6734 created the ARMM in 1989 and RA 9054 expanded its coverage from four to 14 provinces in 2001. RA 9054 was rejected in a plebiscite.

The new region would be called the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). Its creation was set for ratification in a plebiscite in 633 Muslim villages outside of the current ARMM.

3 drafts

Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer, executive director of the Government Peace Negotiating Panel, confirmed the existence of the draft peace agreement, but said there were two drafts, not one.

Eid Kabalu, MILF's civil-military affairs chief, confirmed Lingga's statement but declined to reveal the contents of the MILF draft.

"We have the draft but I can't tell it to you so as not to preempt the talks. It's only between the panels," Kabalu said.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, denied the existence of any draft peace agreement.

He said both panels are not yet done with the issue of ancestral domain.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, also denied the existence of any draft peace agreement.

"How come? We are not even done with the ancestral domain," he said.

Atty. Abraham Kadhali, the president of the Gadhafi International Foundation for Charity Associations, will serve today his meetings with the MILF and President Macapagal-Arroyo. Hadji Macabanse and Argyll Macabenta, Inquirer Mindanao news with reports from Reva Quiroz-delos Reyes and AP

HELP
A water fountain in the middle of Barahan Lake in Baguio City provides another attraction for Baguio visitors. [illegible]

Panay drivers ready for transport strike

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—TRANSPORT groups in three provinces on Panay Island said they will paralyze public transport for two days starting Wednesday to dramatize their protest against rejected oil price increases.

Jeepney and tricycle drivers in Iloilo and Aklan will stop plying their routes starting midnight Wednesday until midnight Friday, while transport groups in Capiz will hold their one-day strike starting midnight Thursday.

Edgar Salcedo, president of the Panay Gasadan ug mga Traspor sa Operator Nationwide (Pasto-Bafed), said 22 jeepney operators and drivers' associations under the Iloilo City Alliance of Drivers Associations would join the strike.

Transport associations playing routes between the city and towns of Iloilo will also join the protest action.

Salcedo said public utility jeeps, vans and tricycles would stop plying their routes in the island province of Guimaras.

The transport groups are calling for the repeal of Republic Act 9479, or the Oil Deregulation Law, which they blamed for the continued increase of oil prices. They also called for the removal of the value-added tax levied on petroleum products.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas lambasted the strike, saying he did not expect public transport in the city to be crippled because some transport groups announced that they will not join the protest action.

SCTEx toll seen to start at ₱2.49/km

CLARK FREEPORT—MOTORISTS will likely pay at least ₱2.49 per kilometer for using the 93-km Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway when it opens in March 2008, an official of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) said.

Jesus Perio III, BCDA executive vice president, said the amount had to be finalized as the BCDA had yet to conclude negotiations with the following toll board.

Robert Gerwasio, SCTEx program manager for operational support, said the ₱2.49-per-kilometer rate was among the figures that came up during the computation.

"That rate is likely because we have considered all factors like traffic volume, extent of road and the basis' repayment commitment. There also, the Subic-Clark route is a rehabilitation to the mountain because of less traffic expected there," Gerwasio said.

Flagship project

BCDA officials briefed reporters on Monday on the status of the SCTEx, a national flagship project of the Arroyo administration.

The government obtained a ₱13.06-billion loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to build the 93-km road linking the Subic Bay Freeport, Clark Freeport and the Luzon Industrial Park.

The BCDA, the project proponent, put in ₱9.2 billion as counterpart to buy lands for the road and pay for other project requirements, permits, contingencies, taxes and duties, according to a report.

Bidding for a permanent toll manager and operator will be done before the middle of next year, Perio said.

For the first six months, the joint ventures of First Philippine Holdings Corp., Egis Road Operation and Tollways Management Corp. will operate the toll way.

The BCDA admitted the ventures after two bidders failed to submit documents required the agency's ruling.

Demand dropped

Eduardo Lima, SCTEx program manager for engineering and construction, said the Japanese consultant of the Subic-Clark segment had adopted dismantling the ₱500 million in "moderation cost."

This happened after the 457-day extension to the Executive Senior Nippon Steel (ESN) Joint Venture, the contractor of the Clark-Tarlac segment, was removed to 148 days. It was supposed to finish that section in August.

"Using their additional days, their extension time was only 148 days," Lima said. He said payment was due to ESN.

"It's a legitimate claim of ESN. It has to be paid by the BCDA in support of the requirements set by the consultants," he said.

ESN, he said, agreed in recent only "overhead contingency and escalation cost." That amount to be immediately confirmed with ESN officials, Timothy Orpia, Inquirer Central Luzon

Groups point at GMA for Mindanao abuses

COTABATO CITY—TWO MORO militant groups yesterday said there was no need to look for its own human rights violations committed by the Arroyo administration.

In a statement, Nasir Dangcomanan and Ismayel said the situation in Basilan and Sulu, and other parts of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), were enough evidence of how the rights of the Moro people were being violated by the government.

The two Moro human rights groups said the police and the military target Moro communities under the counter-insurgency campaign.

And in every operation, Muslims are tagged as terror or bomb suspects, they said.

They also pointed to wanton killings, abductions, torture and arrests on civilian homes by state agents, which resulted in massive evacuation of residents.

Karapan said Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV (Nov. 29), the Arroyo administration has committed 21 cases of human rights violations in the ARMM and some parts of Central Mindanao.

It did not give specifics but advised that it already submitted a report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

But Al Rubarky, Sisters Singaporean national secretary general, said the rights of over 75,000 Moro civilians in Basilan, Sulu and in Mindanao, North Cotabato were also violated when they were displaced by military operations.

Rubarky said the harshest hit by the government's policy of militarization was Sulu when government troops waged "indiscriminate aerial bombings against the groups of Khadafi Janjalani and Jainal Abdul of the Abu Sayyaf Liberation Front."

He said at least 50,000 evacuees were displaced in the operation and their rights to possessed existence violated. Charlie Saturay, Inquirer Mindanao

PROTESTORS carry an image of President Macapagal-Arroyo to show their anger over her administration's alleged human rights violations in a Quezon City rally. [illegible]

Gov't deficit seen behind E. Visayas poor growth

TACLOBAN CITY—EASTERN Visayas has failed to reach its 6.9 percent growth target for 2007 to 2007, a National Economic and Development Authority (Neda)-official said.

"It may be said to some that while we managed a 6.9-percent growth rate in the first three years (2005-2007), what we only achieved was 5.4 [percent]," said Neda regional director Rosemarie Concon-Edrada.

Concon attributed the region's low growth rate to the budget deficit of the national government in 2005-2007, resulting to slow government spending.

Low spending

He said government spending massively hit much of the region's gross regional domestic product (GRDP).

Low government spending has led to a decline in the growth rate "where we were hoping that it would be an increase in these years," Concon said.

The unexpected maintenance shutdown of the Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Psar) plant in Isabel, Leyte in late 2005 also had an adverse effect on the growth of the industry sector that year, he said.

Concon said the industry sector registered fluctuating growth rates in the past three years, from a "7.3 percent growth in 2005 to almost zero growth in 2006 and 6.5 percent in 2006."

"But this year we already recovered," Concon said.

Revised figures

Economic and development planners in Eastern Visayas had revised the regional development plan and lowered their growth target to 6.6 percent in 2013.

Concon said the region missed its previous goal because of unavoidable circumstances, adding that the target for 2008-2010 is double.

He said the updated regional development plan, which was approved by the Regional Development Council early this month, would focus on sustainable productivity and competitiveness in the agriculture and industrial sectors.

Concon said the RDC had revised the regional development plan, mainly to include projects that were not in the development plan for 2008-2010.

"The revision was necessary because there were many new initiatives that came out in 2005, in 2006 and this year," Concon said.

The government has pitched itself with growth rates of more than 6 percent in recent months, but critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo pointed to the growing debt of her administration as proof of her failure to manage the economy well.

Investor reports also have not been met by the economic and financial teams of Arroyo. Ian Ladera, Inquirer Visayas

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Lhyn Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Hail to Pampanga's 'duman' makers

VERONICA SABAJO, 72, one of the pioneer "duman" makers in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, ensures that the native delicacy will be enjoyed by generations to come. (INQ) LYN JUN BANDAYREL

By Tonette Orejas
Sta. Rita, Pampanga

REST WAS NOT FOR 72-YEAR-OLD VERONICA Salazar on the night of Dec. 1. As the miniature cricket by her wrinkled hands scooped "duman" into a wooden square box ("tulad"), an heirloom as old as hers.

But Aling Boning, as Salazar is called in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, insisted on finishing the batch of sweet rice cookies before she went to bed.

Quickly, she poured the green, sweet and crispy cereal in a flat sheet of aluminum foil until she got the measurements right. The pitted grains went to the cobalt blue bowl (3 x 4 kilograms) on the floor's foliopanta.

She wrapped the duman even more gently, defying a wide, expectorious smile as she handed the native delicacy to one buyer.

Inche-an Inanindanan (I will, she gave me an advice. "You can stock that in your refrigerator for weeks. Duman tastes good in milk or cocoa," she told the woman, who confessed that American fare—Archibalgers and fries—extremely made up his her tastebuds.

By 10 p.m., Salazar's quota(y was almost sold out. Her ipa (bamboo basket), filled to the lid three hours ago, was now good enough for only a pot.

Her clothes that night was different. Salazar and her diminishing brood of megalomaniac (duman makers) in Sta. Rita discovered and sold the delicacy amid a musical concert by the Artists, Inc. and a fair of native food.

It is for all of those gems rural folk and all the cultural values that go with their making of the duman that the 6th Duman Festival is held, said Rey Pineda, that night's host.

The event's organizer, Artists, Inc. Foundation Inc., made sure that the façade of the commercial Sta. Rita de Cassia parish church disappeared with Christmas lights this time around.

"This is our tribute to our farmers who, in making the duman, continue to practice hard work and cooperation, virtues that define our people and give life to our communities and town," Pineda said some 5,000 people who canonized the church grounds.

Gov. Eddie Panlilio joined the festivities, the first Pampanga chief executive to do so. For the duman makers, he sang "Kanda (The Voice)."

"Let us be inspired by our duman makers. Let's live by hard work and work together to bring progress to our families and communities," Panlilio, a Catholic priest, said during the concert.

Living tradition

The duman makers have sustained the tradition that Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 and the arrival of other attacks (literal and) no wipe out them. Numerous years after that disaster, farmers continue to grow the glutinous rice in lands revived by lahar soil.

Anyone... another to the Tagalog or northern (monsoon season in climate sometimes—especially the years of duman making.

Cold nights are the ones and women gather at the inlip (open before the house) or backyards of duman makers to contribute their labor to the cooking of the town's specialty. In terms of cost, they share the cooking the grains by their wooden mortars and pestles.

In this culture, 12-hour production process, it is said that intensive libanta, quarters are perched up, peace is maintained, and camaraderie is strengthened among sacred hills.

Salazar senses that up to now, no one wants to "shortcuts" to the making of the duman. The old way of cooking it is retained so that the same taste, texture and color produced decades ago are preserved.

"The duman that you eat now is what our elders made many years ago," she said, stressing the privilege of younger generations in enjoying this gift of a living tradition.

Many Capampangans abroad have not outgrown the duman, suffering (his year round) from their relatives back home, Salazar said.

The festival has been staged annually since 2001, done by Ina by the Artists, Ina Foundation Inc. and, its ensemble of 30 young and old musical artists to be able to express "pride of place and people," said Andy Alve, the foundation's artistic director.

The lively song "Duman," composed and arranged by Pineda, hails the town's duman makers.

The group had been entrusted the General Aldo ng Hanson Award by the Municipal Tourism Council for Culture and Arts early this year for reviving Kapampangan folk songs and creating new compositions.

In May 2008, the group will perform for Kapampangan communities in four states in the United States.

"There's so much to be proud about in local culture. Our duman makers, for one, teach us good values that help us survive the modern world," Alve said.

10 Canon Delighting You Always

0% Shoot, Travel and Fly this Holiday Season.

MiniDV Camcorders

ZR600 ZR630 ZR850

DVD Camcorders

DC210 DC220 DC230

DC50

High Definition Video Camcorders

HV20 HR10 AVCHD DVD

HG10 AVCHD HDD HV10

Canon Inspiration HOLIDAY!

Igorot priest now leads nat'l church council

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

IT WON'T BE SURPRISING IF AN ANGLICAN PRIEST, who is the first indigenous person to be elected general secretary of a national organization of mainline Protestant churches, pushes for the integration of indigenous culture into Christian values and rituals.

"I will definitely strengthen the program on indigenous peoples, because I am indigenous person myself, but because the churches are also keen a lot from indigenous peoples' sense of justice, community and stewardship of creation," said Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes Jr., 48, a native of Sagada, Mt. Province, and the new executive secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Formed in 1963, the NCCP groups 18 churches, which are committed to unity and service, human rights and social justice. Aglipayan Catholic Church (which a different from the Roman Catholic Church), Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Iglesia Unida Ekumenikal, Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Salvation Army United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and United Methodist Church.

"In Christianity, we have to affirm all that is good in the culture of our indigenous communities," Reyes said. "We can affirm, for example, the strong sense of community and culture of sharing of indigenous peoples as we struggle against the individualist and consumerist values being pushed by capitalist globalization."

Grabbing headlines

Reyes, a priest from the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) assigned as rector of the Aurora Episcopal Theological Center in Quezon City is the program secretary of the NCCP's Christian Unity and Ecumenical Relations program. He is the 7th general secretary of the 44-year-old NCCP.

Reyes said he would sustain the imaginative and innovative work of his predecessor, who "shared much to the NCCP's commitment to the pursuit of peace and justice."

Under the leadership of Bishop-pastor Shalom Ibon Joy Nasa-Inocencio, the first woman general secretary, the NCCP in the past eight years has made a mark in human rights and peace ministry and in the struggle against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

It grabbed the headlines in March when it released a historic statement that Germany's delegation called the "Ecumenical Voice" to air the issue of extrajudicial killings of activists, church workers and journalists, and other human rights violations in the countryside, mostly in Mindanao.

These efforts culminated in an unprecedented US Senate hearing called by Sen. Barbara Boxer to look into the issue.

As a result, the American government pledged that it would not "interfere with aid to the Philippines because the aid, as human rights advocates say, might be used to help perpetrate extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations."

On May 16, the National Christian Council of Churches on the 55th and the Church World Service presented an award of excellence to the NCCP for its "outstanding work in the areas of human rights promotion and humanitarian advocacy in the Philippines." It was the first time the award was given to a group outside the United States.

Reyes vowed to continue and strengthen the work of his predecessor but he said he would also "open up a new addressed program working to "give voice" to some 15 million indigenous peoples in the country.

Indigenous peoples continue to be deprived of their lands and resources, he said, because of the onslaught of big local and transnational companies, such as those involved in large-scale mining and plantation farms, and of big government development projects, such as dams.

He said he would help push the resumption of peace talks between the government and the communist National Democratic Front and between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

To do this, he said, he would address with other ecumenical groups, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, Ecumenical Bishops Forum, and the Bishops-Ulama Conference, all of which, he noted, are committed to peace.

NEWSBRIEFS

Rail link urged

NAGA CITY—The new head of the Philippine National Railways is pushing for commuter train operations between Sanchez Mira and Albay.

Jesus Sandal, PNR chief, said key to the operation of the first commuter train outside Metro Manila was to build the bridge washed out by Supertyphoon "Yolanda" in Tiwi-sic, Albay.

To cost at least P175 million, the bridge will connect the Legazpi City terminal, the east of the south railway system, to the terminal in Sorsogon City, the first town on the boundary of Bicol province, added Andal.

The south railway system has been non-operational after a PNR train was derailed in Barangay Cutac, Pedro Burgos, Sorsogon on Nov. 12, 2004, leaving 13 persons dead and scores injured.

Joan Escander Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Shabu ingredient seized

MALANGA CITY—A former Sanggunian Kabataan official in Abucay, Bataan, was arrested after police seized at least 31 kilograms of ephedrine, an ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine hydrochloride, or "shabu," in his house Dec. 7.

Police said Emerson Dizon, 31, former SK chief of Calaylayan in Abucay, was arrested after agents found four jute sacks containing ephedrine in a raid.

Chief Supt. Ferdinand Pao, Central Luzon police director, said policemen and PDEA agents searched the house on the basis of a warrant issued by a local court on Dec. 3.

Supt. Diosdado Ramonida, Bataan police director, said the value of the confiscated ephedrine, when processed into shabu, would reach more than P3 million.

Greg Bahanonian with a report from Doaks Chaipa, Inquirer Central Luzon

Suspension enforced

NAGA CITY—The Sandiganbayan Fifth Division has ordered the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government to implement a court resolution dated April 26, 2006 that suspended Iloilo town mayor Benjamin Decena for 90 days.

In a resolution Nov. 19, 2007, the Sandiganbayan gave weight to the argument of the prosecution that even as Decena lost in the 2004 elections, his protest was dismissed by a court and that, when he regained his position as mayor on May 10, 2007, the suspension order became enforceable again.

Decena was suspended over the operations of a cockpit in the town.

Joan Escander Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Gunmen kill councilor

MALIBU CITY—Motorcycle-riding men shot and killed a town councilor in Pakdan, Compostela Valley on Dec. 7.

Police identified the victim as councilor Roberto Bustillo of Pantukan town.

Arevalo, 58, was on board his jeep and was traveling along Calabaro Street in Barangay Kingking at around 6:30 p.m. when the suspects pulled up beside him and shot him at close range.

Amadeo Lee, Inquirer Mindanao

58 mourners poisoned

CEBU CITY—Fifty-eight people who were about to attend the burial of a neighbor in Barangay Bulacao this city were doomed by food poisoning.

All of the victims were to attend the afternoon burial but started getting ill after they ate lunch served by the family of the departed.

Dr. Myrna So, medical director of the Cebu City Medical Center (CCMC), said all the victims were in stable condition but remained under observation at the hospital.

So said the patients were given intravenous fluids at the hospital and remained confined at the CCMC.

So said the patients started arriving at the hospital at noon. "First there were six and then 20 ... 40. Now they numbered 58," So said.

So said the patients ate pork and noodles for lunch.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

American held for theft

BAGUIO CITY—An American national married to a Filipino was arrested here on charges of theft, police said Sunday.

Eric John Daniel Benton Jr., who lives on Bonifacio St., Brookside, boasted he was innocent.

Benton was sued by lawyer Dominador Cunial Jr. for allegedly stealing shares from the house he previously conducted to the American national.

Benton denied the charges adding there were trumped-up. He said he had a quarrel with the lawyer's wife before he transferred to another house on the western side.

SPO3 Ludivar Delos Santos, city police investigator, said Benton's arrest was backed by a warrant. He said aside from theft, Benton also faces an estafa case for refusing to pay the electric bills he incurred while living at the Cuartito house.

Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

Sayyaf member captured

ZAMBOANGA CITY—An alleged Abu Sayyaf member linked to the 2001 kidnapping of American missionaries Martin Burnham and his wife Gracia, and several other persons, was captured by authorities here on Dec. 10.

City police chief Senior Supt. Manuel Barcelona said Adel Hamala, alias Abu Mosab and Boy Sniper, was arrested along Concrete Street here around 4:30 p.m.

Barcelona said Hamala was one of those convictions absentia for the Dos Palmas kidnapping and also bears charges for the Lamitan siege of June 2, 2001.

Jude Espina, Inquirer Mindanao

Camp John Hay debts reach ₱2.5B

THE DELL Amphitheater is among the American landmarks preserved inside the Camp John Hay in Baguio City.

BAGUIO CITY—PLANS TO maximize government revenues from Camp John Hay now include the lease of its forest lands to businesses that cater to ecotourism, Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said on Monday.

For Bautista and the city government wants a role in drawing up those projects for the former American rest and recreation center because the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) has failed to address its John Hay project's accumulating debts, now about ₱2.5 billion.

The 48 forest-covered Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco) was the lease in 1996 and has established Camp John Hay as a known resort destination.

But a suspended panorama when the Supreme Court ruled that the 600 hectare Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone did not have the legal mandate to offer tax privileges to its locators when it was created in 1994.

Congress has converted this Base to Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law) through an amendment because of this void.

But lawyer Georgina Alvarez, CJHDevco senior vice president, said back channel talks with BCDA are still ongoing to determine when the firm now stands to be lease acquainted with government.

CJHDevco had sued government before an arbitration court for ₱5.9 billion in lost profits because of the Supreme Court ruling.

The city government has asked almost ₱800 million of the CJHDevco debts, as part of its 25 percent share from Camp John Hay's development.

CJHDevco's debts have increased. Bautista's constituted revenues as 2007 winds up, Bautista said.

He said he and Rep. Mauricio Domogan have started reviewing the progress of talks on the CJHDevco's outstanding rent as well as the new lease arrangements that BCDA was preparing for redevelopment contracts of Camp John Hay.

Secretary of the John Hay Court are now up for lease as a result of those talks, Bautista said, "but under a new type of lessee."

A director of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), BCDA's estate manager here, confirmed that among the plans for John Hay is to "do" out portions of the underdeveloped forests. **Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon**

GE Consumer & Industrial Appliances

Cool gift.
Warm reception.

If you're looking for a wedding gift that will have the couple remember you warmly for life, get a GE, the set that's built to last and last and last. It's America's most preferred appliance brand.*

Buy selected GE products today and get a free stand fan. Hurry. Supplies are limited.**

GE imagination at work

Star Fridge Refrigerator Washing Machine Microwave oven Aircon Amber Dispenser

THANKS. President Arroyo receives the grateful hands of Marilou Renario, the OFW in Kuwait she saved from the gallows when she personally traveled to that country to ask the emir to spare her life. From left are Renario's sister Wilfreda, daughter Rosalie, son Rolly John, mother Encarnacion and father Renario.

Top ARMM cop gets ultimatum: Get Bedol by Dec. 31, or else...

By Beverly T. Mendrigal
and Akoni Pope

THE POLICE CHIEF OF THE AUTONOMOUS Region in Muslim Mindanao has until Dec. 31 to arrest Datumg Bedol, the wanted election supervisor of Maguindanao.

The Commission on Elections reminded Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Gen. Avelino Razon Jr., chief of the Philippine National Police, that Bedol remains at large.

Esperon and Razon were given the deadline by Comelec Chairman Jose Melo during a meeting with the two generals at the Comelec office in Intramuros, Manila, on Monday.

Melo said Esperon and Razon were told that Bedol's arrest was the "last chance" for them to prove their worth as officials of the government

GMA most corrupt President, says Pulse Asia

From page A1

their respective administrations.

Estrada was convicted of plunder in September but was pardoned by Ms Arroyo the following month.

Last night, Ms Arroyo insisted that her administration was doing something to stamp out corruption, which she said "erodes the lifeblood of our system."

"No experience has shown, it won't be eliminated overnight, but I assure you that progress has been made," she said in a speech at the Centennial Anniversary of the Philippine Columbian Association at its clubhouse in Pasay, Manila.

Perception clouds reality

Ms Arroyo said Tony Kwok, who the government hired to help address corruption in the country, "believes perception clouds the reality, but my progress... to reducing corruption and red tape."

Kwok is a former deputy commissioner of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, which has succeeded in curbing rampant graft in the former British colony.

"But the fact is we are undertaking a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative controls and procedural reforms," she said, noting that this effort was focused on the revenue agencies.

"We believe that perception will match reality in a few years," she said.

Pronounced in classes ABC

The sentiment that the Arroyo administration was the most corrupt was more pronounced in Metro Manila (56 percent) and in socioeconomic group ABC (50 percent), the middle and upper classes.

Fifty percent in Luzon outside Metro Manila, 39 percent in the Visayas, 28 percent in Mindanao, as well as 47 percent in class D, and 27 percent in class E shared the same sentiment.

The survey was conducted from Oct. 28 to 31 when reports on the cash handouts to local government officials in Mabuhay, Sorsogon coddled Ms Arroyo's wife Mike and the planned retreat of an impeachment complaint against her, and the continuing Senate investigation of the ZTE contract dominated the headlines.

No difference

Pulse Asia said there was "no difference" in results concerning Ms Arroyo and the question on the most corrupt President, even when the results were broken down to age brackets of "below 40" (those who were about 10 years old as of 1986) and "over 40."

Of those aged 18 and above, 41 percent pointed to Ms Arroyo as the most corrupt leader in Philippine history, while 38 percent pointed to Marcos.

Asked which administration had the most intense allegations of corruption, 45 percent pointed to the Arroyo administration, 21 percent to the Marcos administration and 14 percent to the Estrada administration.

Seven percent said it was the Ramos administration that had the most intense allegations, while only 1 percent mentioned the Aquino administration in this respect.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said the government was investing in creating red tape and in eliminating corruption.

Problem for generations

She said "people deserved an honest and hard working government" because they were honest and hard working.

The problem of corruption has "plagued the Philippines and other countries for generations," Ms Arroyo said.

Forty-five percent in Mindanao viewed the Marcos administration as having the most intense corruption allegations, while 19 percent in the Visayas viewed the Estrada administration in the same light.

Asked which President was "most corrupt" in the history of the country, 41 percent across the country answered Mr Arroyo, 35 percent mentioned Marcos, while 16 percent pointed to Estrada. Five percent answered Ramos, and 1 percent Aquino.

Half of the respondents in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon and class ABC viewed Ms Arroyo as "most corrupt"—an opinion shared by 43 percent in class D and 35 percent in class E, as well as 39 percent in Mindanao and 27 percent in the Visayas.

Half of the respondents in Mindanao considered Marcos as the most corrupt, while 33 percent in the Visayas viewed Estrada as the most corrupt.

Least corrupt

The survey also found that 66 percent viewed Mr Aquino as the least corrupt President. Eleven percent answered Arroyo; 9 percent, Marcos; 6 percent, Ramos, and 5 percent, Mr Estrada.

The survey used face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,200 representative adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Ricky Pedroso, Inquirer Research and Christine D. Avendaño

ON THE GO: President Arroyo walks past the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as she goes to her next appointment at the Palace. CONGRESS

An Advisory From
Wyeth Consumer Healthcare

Phenylephrine HCl
Brompheniramine Maleate

DIMETAPP® Syrup

Continues To Be Available.

We at Wyeth Philippines wish to let our consumers know that the Dosing-Recommended Cold Medicine for Kids, Dimetapp Syrup 60 and 120 mL, can be purchased at drugstores nationwide.

We are making this clarification to correct the impression that Dimetapp Syrup was included in our voluntary withdrawal of Dimetapp Oral Drops, a cold remedy specifically for children below 2 years old. The withdrawal was made to avoid potential misuse and incidence of errors in dosage.

We also wish to take this opportunity to remind our consumers to always consult their doctors before treating the common symptoms of colds, especially for children under 6 years of age, and to always read and follow directions printed on the label. Giving your children the proper dosage assures you that the medicine will be safe and effective for them.

Should you have more questions about Dimetapp Syrup as well as about these friendly reminders, please contact Wyeth's 24-Hour Consumer Relations Group at 819-4284, or through the provincial toll-free 1-800-10-894-2222. You may also write us at wpcomments@wyeth.com

Vanessa Cadenas, M.D.
Wyeth Medical Director

Wyeth
Consumer Healthcare

Available in 60 mL and 120 mL

Filipinos 'upbeat' on 2008—survey

From page A1

cash handouts to congressmen and governors in Malacañang, renewed calls for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Glorietta 2 blast, the continuing investigation of the ZTE contract, the granting of a pardon to convicted plunderer former President Joseph Estrada, the unabated rise in oil prices and the steady appreciation of the peso.

Classes ABC optimistic

Pulse Asia's "Ulat ng Bayan" survey also found that optimism about the coming year was more pronounced in Luzon outside Metro Manila (69 percent) and among members of classes ABC (87 percent).

Eighty-five percent in the Visayas, 79 percent in Metro Manila and 75 percent in Mindanao said they were looking the coming year with hope, as did 84 percent among members of class D and 81 percent in class E.

Nationwide, 9 percent said they were facing 2008 "with apprehension"—about the same as the 8 percent in 2006 but much lower than the 28 percent in 2005.

Only 7 percent said they were facing the coming year with neither hope nor apprehension.

Neither better nor worse

Half of Filipinos said that this Christmas would neither be better nor worse than the last, an opinion shared across all areas and classes but most pronounced in Metro Manila (57 percent) and among members of classes ABC (61 percent).

Fifty-five percent in the rest of Luzon and 44 percent in the Visayas and Mindanao also said that this coming Christmas would neither be more prosperous nor poorer than last year's celebrations. In sum, 31 percent in class B and 42 percent in class E.

Nationwide, the sentiment that this Christmas would be more prosperous than the previous one (27 percent) was almost the same as the 25 percent recorded in November 2006 but much higher than the 16 percent in October 2005.

This opinion was more prominent in Mindanao (38 percent) and among members of class E (38 percent). It was 31 percent in the Visayas, 29 percent in Metro Manila and 23 percent in the rest of Luzon. This optimism was shared by 27 percent of the class D and 24 percent of those belonging to lower ABC.

The percentage of those who said that this Christmas would be poorer than the previous year (23 percent) was almost similar to the figure registered in November 2006 (25 percent), but much lower than the 43 percent in October 2005.

Across-areas, 27 percent in the Visayas, 24 percent in the rest of Luzon, 23 percent in Metro Manila and 15 percent in Mindanao said that Christmas would be poorer than last year's, while 28 percent in class E, 22 percent in class D and 15 percent in class ABC said the same.

The survey used face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,200 representative adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Ricky Pedroso, Inquirer Research

Media barred from covering Magdalo trial in court

By DJ Yap

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE trial of the Oakwood coup d'etat case yesterday was a major casualty of the outspoken measures taken to secure Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and junior officers charged over the Nov. 29 takeover of the Peninsula Manila.

No journalist or photographer was allowed inside the courtroom of Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 to report on the proceedings, drawing complaints from the media and even some of the prosecutors and lawyers.

"We don't want a secret trial," said State Prosecutor Juan Ponce Enrile. "It would not do for the media to simply conduct interviews after the fact," he said.

Previously, the court hearings were open to the media, provided they left their mobile phones and recording equipment on a table set up outside.

Rosalina Bagdadiel, the branch clerk of court, said there was an agreement between the building administration and the judge to accommodate only the accused, their escorts, the lawyers and prosecutors, considering the small space.

He said the decision to keep the media from the courtroom was also to "safeguard the right of the accused to due process."

Tight space

But Pimentel has said he would allow the presence of the media during the promulgation of his decision, Bagdadiel said.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles said the court's decision was likely from one of "practical considerations."

Based on her count, there were more than 80 people crammed inside the courtroom, with the 24 accused each escorted by a guard, plus more than a dozen people from the prosecution panel, the Office of the Solicitor General and the defense lawyers.

Nominally the courtroom can only accommodate 30 to 40 people, she said.

But Angeles shared Ateneo's view that the trial should be open to the public.

"Defense lawyers are concerned from giving them opinion lest they be accused of trying to influence the outcome of the case, so it's better if the media can see for themselves and report what is happening to the public," she said.

Court decision

Attempts to slip into the courtroom by some reporters failed after the military escorts took note of the identities of every one inside and asked for IDs.

Television cameras and photographers were allowed to occupy an area at the far end of the lobby several feet from the courtroom, causing grumbling among the cameramen who complained they were not close enough.

After the hearing, reporters scrambled to get interviews with the departing lawyers and prosecutors or try to recreate the scene inside the courtroom. Trillanes and the other accused only waved to the cameras.

Pool reporting

Following the Oakwood and Manila Peninsula standoff on Nov. 29, reporters were arrested and handcuffed for allegedly interfering in the police operation.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, Philippine National Police spokesperson, yesterday suggested that media people form a pool to cover courtroom situations.

"Maybe coverages by media can be narrowed out using a pool of reporters who will have to share their stories with everyone else," Pagdilao said. He said the PNP could suggest this arrangement during the next PNP meeting with the media.

Close-circuit TV

But the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines yesterday urged the courts to be "more transparent."

"Although we understand that the court can bar the media for security reasons, it should respect the media's access to information," NUJP president Jose Torres said in a phone interview.

"If close-circuit TV was necessary, the court could give a preview of public address system and CCTV (close circuit TV) for the benefit of the media. They should be more transparent," he added. With reports from DJ Burgonio and Akiatis Papa

Trillanes says sorry to judge for walkout but not to GMA

Front page A-1

tion submitted to Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Saying they "meant no disrespect" to the judge, the accused said they were "impelled by their position, and not because of their status (and) merely had to act when they did."

Pimentel accepted the apology but warned that any repeat of their action "shall be dealt with more seriously."

More than 1,000 soldiers and police along with an armored personnel carrier (APC) were deployed in the Makati City Hall area. A Philippine Air Force contingent in black panther uniforms hugging long firearms patrolled the building and quadrangle.

Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and four other servicemen were handcuffed to their police escorts. Lim, 52, a former Scout Ranger Regiment commander under detention for the failed February 2006 coup, was a defense witness in the Oakwood trial.

Media people were barred from the hearing. Police reminded the courtroom and new security reporters who attempted to mingle with the small crowd: Disobey-shoot.

Pimentel is the presiding judge in the trial of the failed Oakwood mutiny of 2003.

During the hearing on Nov. 29, Trillanes and the other accused walked out and marched on the Peninsula, triggering a standoff that ended seven hours later when police retained an APC into the lobby of the five-star hotel and lobbed tear gas canisters inside.

Trillanes, Lim, former Sen. President Teofisto Guingona, Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen, roaming priest Fr. Robert Reyes and 32 other soldiers and civilians have been charged with rebellion in connection with the Peninsula standoff but the case has not been scheduled for a hearing.

Enough force

Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, chief of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command, said the security contingent were changed on City Hall to thwart any repetition of the walkout.

"There was enough force prepared for any contingency. We won't allow anything to happen," Mesa said.

President Arroyo, who is currently spending a trip in France, Spain, Britain and Canada, has vowed to punish those involved in the Peninsula incident "with the full force of the law," calling them a "few desperate men."

Eleven of the 14 Oakwood mutineers facing trial for the failed coup d'etat in 2003 signed the manifestation apologizing to Pimentel and other parties present during the walkout.

Capt. Nicanor Bedrijo, who has remained missing since the incident, did not sign the pleading. Capt. Sagarabedo Dellatan and Lt. Billy Pastera also did not sign but expressed their apology through an oral manifestation by lawyer Theodore Te.

Hope and prayer

"Accordingly, herein accused most respectfully beg and humbly beseech the apologies (sic) of the Honorable Court, the Honorable Presiding Judge as well as the lawyers and other parties during the hearing last 29 November 2007," the 11 soldiers said.

"Herein accused further pray and hope that the Honorable Presiding Judge and the lawyers and other parties present during that day would find it in their hearts to forgive accused for their actions on that day and that the same be not allowed to prejudice the merits of their case," they added.

Capt. Gerardo Gambala, all of those who participated in the Peninsula takeover were sentenced by his yesterday's hearing.

Based on the accounts of defense lawyers and prosecutors, the 13 junior officers who walked out remained handcuffed in the courtroom while their fellow accused who did not join the march were unshackled.

Well-behaved

"They were somber," said State Prosecutor Juan Ponce Enrile, a member of the justice department panel prosecuting the case for the government.

"They were well-behaved. There was no disruption. Some were well-behaved, some were smiling. There was nothing of the sort of (commotion that occurred in the last hearing)," said Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon.

Some members of the group, including Trillanes, were "stoic" throughout the hearing, lawyer Trixie Angeles, who represents Fadullon, said.

Angeles' presence was questioned by the prosecution panel, who said she could not represent Fadullon, a "fugitive," but the lawyer argued that there is nothing in existence that bars

PERFORMANCE LEVEL: Like a recurring hero, Trillanes arrives at the Makati RTC in a celebrity-stuck crowd while under guard by Scouts. AFP/CESAR RAMIREZ

THREE IS COMPANY: Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim is escorted by no less than three close-in guards. AFP/CESAR RAMIREZ

MAN-TO-MAN: Every Magdalo soldier who goes to court is handcuffed to this guard. A lesson in security precautions has been learned albeit belatedly.

Palace did not release P100-M pork requested by Trillanes

Front page A-1

lawyer and former chief of staff, said there was no connection between the pork barrel request and Trillanes' actions on Nov. 29.

"That's anathema nonsense, this. He made the request recently and funds are not released immediately. So why would he make a fuss about it?" Robles said.

Aprosol claimed he got this information from an unofficial source.

"Said the funds been released, perhaps he could have used the funds to topple the government," he said.

"The pork barrel, as the Poverty Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), comes from the national budget and finances the pet projects of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is a form of allocation of kickbacks for lawmakers.

A senator is entitled to P200 million in PDAF and a member of the House, P70 million.

Villar endorsement

More than a month before the failed revolt, the former military-educated senator sought the release of P100 million of his pork barrel.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. endorsed on Nov. 12 Trillanes' request to the DBM for the release of the amount to fund his priority projects for 2007.

Villar confirmed that he signed and endorsed Trillanes' request, but said it was just ministerial on his part.

He said he endorsed the request of all senators. "But no funds are released to the opposition," he said.

Aprosol said the DBM received the Senate endorsement of Trillanes' projects on Nov. 23.

"You could see how this issue stinks. He thinks he can buy off the military with the government. While he is trying to topple the government, he's also trying to demand funds from it," Aprosol said.

Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 31 others have been charged with rebellion for the takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel in Makati City.

The seven-hour siege ended when Trillanes and his group surrendered to authorities.

Aid to patients

At a news briefing, Aprosol released to reporters a copy of the Oct. 15 letter of Trillanes to Villar and copies of 54 priority projects he wished to finance.

In his letter of request, Trillanes identified the projects, the agencies that would implement them, the amounts where the projects would be implemented and the amount of each project.

Most of the projects included "assistance to indigent patients" but Trillanes also sought funding for public works projects such as the construction of an irrigation water system, and medical, dental and municipal buildings.

In his letter to Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr., Villar said Trillanes was seeking P40 million from the public works funds and P60 million from the PDAF.

Turnaround

Shortly after assuming office, Trillanes declared he would not touch his pork barrel allocation, like opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Trillanes denounced pork barrel as a source of corruption.

Robles said the recipient senator changed his mind "upon the advice of people from the Senate, his consultants, and myself (Robles)."

"Initially, he didn't want to touch it. But if he did not use it, somebody would," Robles said, citing administration Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago's reasoning that senators should use their pork barrel to help public hospitals.

Robles said the senator, however, made it clear to the beneficiaries that he would not get any commission from the projects.

No funds for opposition

"We know that the pork barrel is not released to opposition members, but local governments officials said they would follow it up and do liaison work with Malacañang for its release," Robles said.

Aprosol said Trillanes was asking the funds for "allegedly certain projects but we have doubts if it would be used for projects because he has a different agenda."

"He's interested to finance his own agenda," he said in a press briefing.

Rights suspended

Aprosol said the DBM did not release the amounts requested by the senator. Aprosol said: "Because he did not respect this government ... why should it be given to him?"

"You see Trillanes was talking about toppling this government. That is what precipitated this government to hold in abeyance the release of this funds," he said.

"This was actually later on supported by his acts at Manila Pen."

Aprosol said he did not think the senator should be taunted and that it was only "right" that a rebellion charge was filed against him.

But he said the deemed existence of martial rule could not be used as evidence in the latter's rebellion case, noting that "it is an evidence about how this fellow thinks that he can toy with this government..."

Given that Trillanes sought to topple the government, the senator "had no right to ask funds" from it, Aprosol said.

Being detained for his involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, Trillanes "under the Revised Penal Code ... has no rights. His rights are suspended," the President's legal counsel said.

"He has to go to court, seek permission from the court for the release of funds," Aprosol said.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNERS Al Gore (left) and coworker, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change represented by its chair, Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, share a hearty laugh during a CNN interview following the award's announcement in Oslo, Norway. —

Gore tells world: Time . . .

From page A1

warming and spreading awareness on how to counteract it. His fellow winner, the 2,500-member Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, was represented by its leader, Rajendra Pachauri.

Gore, who lost the 2000 US presidential race by a razor-thin margin, said Pachauri accepted the Nobel gold medal and diploma as a joint ceremony in the Oslo City Hall.

In his speech, Gore urged governments of the following in Bali, Indonesia, to quickly draft a treaty to limit emissions of the gases that cause climate change, as a follow-up to the 1997 Kyoto accord. He said Pachauri can bearing the Bali on Wednesday.

Appeal to US, China

In a speech that evoked Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi and the Bible, Gore said the world's biggest polluters, the United States and China, must stop blaming each other for the nonaction over warming.

Instead, the United States and China must take the lead in solving a problem for which they bear a large responsibility or be held "unconscionable before history for their failure to act," Gore said.

He drew a parallel between leaders ignoring the climate crisis and those whom Churchill, the British prime minister, lambasted for inaction as Adolf Hitler built up Nazi Germany before World War II.

"Too many of the world's leaders are still less dreamlike in the words Winston Churchill applied to those who ignored Adolf Hitler's threat: 'They go on in a strange paradox, decisively activity to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for inaction,'" added the Shabby, all powerful to be impotent," Gore said.

To meet the new "planetary emergency," he said: "We must quickly mobilize our civilization with the urgency and resolve that has previously been seen only when nations mobilized for war."

Threats can be met

Although Pachauri described the threat largely in measured, scientific terms, he too described a grim fate for the planet if the emission of greenhouse gases is not limited.

At a warming climate could lead to flooding of low-lying countries, disruptions to food supply, the spread of diseases and the loss of biodiversity, he said.

"Neglect in preserving our heritage of natural resources could prove extremely harmful for the human race and for all species that share common space on Planet Earth," Pachauri said in his speech. "It is within the reach of human society to meet these threats."

Gore said the next generation would ask the present generation one of two questions. "Either they will ask: What were you thinking, why didn't you act? Or they will ask instead: How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?"

10 others honored

The Nobel Prizes for medicine, chemistry, physics, literature and economics were presented in a separate ceremony on Monday in Stockholm, Sweden, where five Americans and five Europeans were honored for their groundbreaking achievements in science and literature.

Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf presented the awards amid tuxedo-clad audiences and as by members of the Nobel committee in medicine, physics, chemistry, economics and literature at Stockholm's Concert Hall.

The oldest laureates—literature prize winner Doris Lessing, 88, and economics cowinner Leonid Hurwicz, 90,—were not able to travel to Stockholm for health reasons. They will receive their prizes at separate ceremonies in London and Minnesota, respectively.

Lessing, who saw her breakthrough with the 1962 novel "The Golden Notebook," had "personified the woman's role in the 20th century," literature committee chair Per Wästberg said in a speech.

"Age is no issue in literature. You are forever young and wise, old and rebellious," Wastenberg said about the British writer.

Prize for physics

Albert Fert of France and Peter Grunberg of Germany received the physics for discovering a phenomenon that enables computers and digital music players to store mantic of data on ever-shrinking hard disks.

"One can see all justice say that this offers a one prerequisite for the modern IT revolution," Nobel committee member Svante Johansson said.

At dinner banquet later Monday, Fert

FOOTNOTE: Observed during the Nobel Peace Prize awarding was at the City Hall in Oslo was Al Gore's greatest choice of footwear. Al Gore's greatest choice of footwear: Cowboy boots, right down beside his Nobel diploma under his seat. —

said that in his youth he dreamed of entering the field of arts, inspired by Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman.

"I realized unfortunately I was light years from Ingmar Bergman . . . but I thought that I had some skills in physics," Fert said, explaining his career choice.

Chemistry prize

The chemistry prize was awarded to Germany's Gerhard Ertl for his studies of chemical reactions on solid surfaces, while the medicine prize was shared by Mario Capecchi and Oliver Smithies, both of the United States, and Sir Martin J. Evans of Britain for discoveries that led to a technique for manipulating mouse genes.

Yale Hinkler and Roger Myerson, both of the United States, were co-laureates for the economics prize they shared with Hurwicz, the oldest Nobel laureate ever—for work on how people's knowledge and self-interest affect their behavior in the market or in social situations such as voting and labor negotiations.

The awards were announced in October but are always presented in Oslo and Stockholm on Dec. 10 in mark the anniversary of the 1896 death of their creator, Alfred Nobel. The first Nobel Prizes were handed out in 1901. AP

Dispute over new pact mars Kyoto Protocol's 10th birthday

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—THE worldwide hiatus on climate change marked the 10th anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday, but the celebrations were shadowed by doubts on a new pact to tackle global warming.

A giant birthday cake was unveiled on the sidelines of the talks in Bali to commemorate Dec. 11, 1997 when the world's most ambitious environment treaty was born in the Japanese city of Kyoto.

But parties were to be trapped in the evening, one by Japanese green groups and the other by the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Kyoto Protocol took effect on Feb. 16, 2005, after grinding negotiations to complete its rule book on making greenhouse gas emissions.

In its present form, however, the Kyoto accord will not do enough to stem the surge in pollution, which scientists say is badly damaging the Earth's climate system.

More droughts and floods, rising sea levels and more violent storms in just decades away, according to world scientists.

The conference of 190 countries is working on clean up the so-called "Bali roadmap" that will set the parameters for further negotiations leading to a new accord to accelerate cuts in greenhouse gas emissions after 2012, when the protocol's current roster of pledges runs out.

Only 3 days left

European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said just three days remained for discussing their a new pact "is sufficiently ambitious to tackle the climate challenge we face."

"I believe that the conference is on track to deliver good results, but the next three days will be decisive and I have no doubt that there will be some difficult discussions," he said.

Officials involved in crafting the Bali Roadmap are struggling set key questions on how emissions the post-2012 negotiation mandate should be and whether the negotiations should be set a two-year deadline for conclusion.

A previous announcement by industrialized countries, declaring their "ambition" to reduce their own carbon emissions by between 25 and 40 percent by 2020 was panned with 1,990 feeds, was worried out in a user's version of the text, according to green groups.

Similar text was under threat in a second document, that time

THE WORLDWIDE FORUM on climate change in Bali, marks the 10th anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday. The cake it shows that the party mood was prevalent, as delegates failed to warn global warming agreement. —

from a group that includes the United States, Japan and Canada which argued that such figures would prejudge the negotiations for the post-2012 accord.

Direct business fudge

But green activists warned against changes that would turn the treaty's centerpiece roadmap into a directionless fudge.

"Ministers current leave full without an ambitious mandate. Despite sweet hop it," said WWF's Hans Verolme.

The 25-40 percent figure holds support of thousands of climate scientists estimate by the 1995 Nobel-winning scientific panel for limiting warming to around 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial times.

UNFCCC Executive Director Yvo de Boer, however, insisted that the figure had never been enshrined as a target for the committee and was more of a guideline, adding that the Bali conference should be used to launch a negotiation process.

Those and other thorny details are expected to be thrashed over to environment ministers, whose meeting from Wednesday to Friday will end the conference.

Significant success

Late Monday, the talks notched up their first significant success with a decision on how to administer a fund to bolster the defenses of poor countries that lack the money, technology and skills to cope with climate change.

It will be financed by a levy of 2 percent on transactions under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a piece of Kyoto machinery by which rich countries get carbon credits. They can offset their own carbon against low-emission projects, provided they invest in clean energy projects in poor countries.

The Bali talks are taking

SPORTS

Williams is week's best

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION's Purefoods Corned Beef Giants yesterday named Hillcan Bobby Williams of Sta. Lucia as its Player of the Week for the period of Dec. 5-10.

Williams was instrumental in the Realtors' victories over the Alaska Aces, 94-88, Wednesday at the Big Dome and the Barangay Ginebra Kings, 79-76, Sunday at the Araneta.

In those two wins, Williams averaged 15.5 points, 9.0 rebounds, two assists and 2.5 steals.

The high-leaping sophomore shone the brightest in the win over Ginebra when he busted four booming triples in the fourth quarter including three in the last three minutes that gave Sta. Lucia a share of the No. 5 spot with Talk 'N Text and A-Tech Ceed Aces.

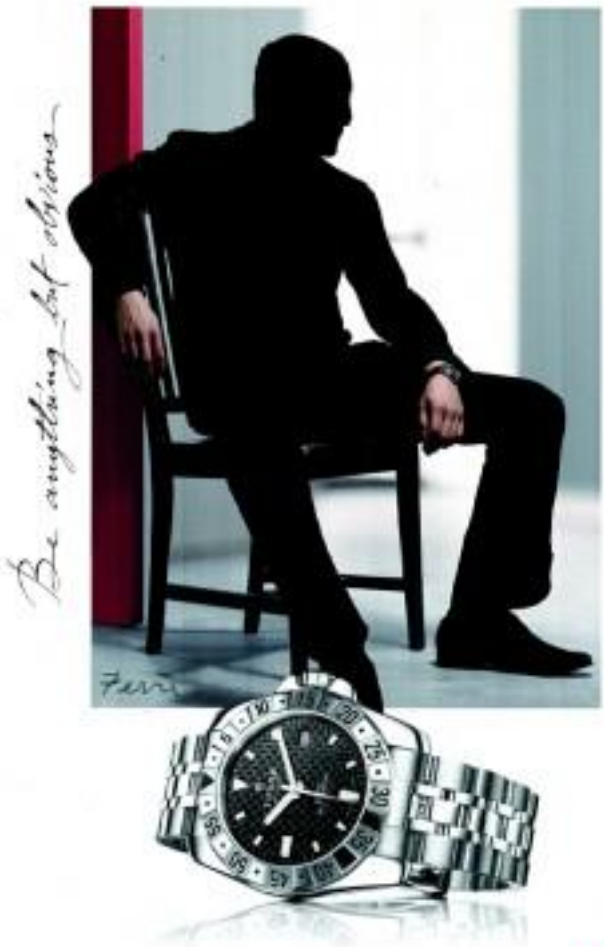
"He's capable of making the big shots and showed that in this game," said Sta. Lucia coach Bayot Hernandez of Williams' outburst after their Barangay Ginebra win.

Other players mentioned for the plum, sponsored by Smart and Accel, were Sta. Lucia teammates Rollmer Gaudino and Paolo Mendoza.

Gaudino, another of Sta. Lucia's high-leapers, made Swish turn when he unleashed a 29-point effort in the Alaska victory. That was a career-day of his career-best 16-point performance in a 109-103 loss to Red Bull on April 20 last year.

Mendoza, for his part, featured a difficult rounding, fade-away jumper with 4.6 seconds to go over the charging Mark Cagulangan.

PUREFOODS' Marc Pingris looks as if he has two-three-cubic-inventions in mind as he tries to defend against Welcoat's Jun De Vera in their game Sunday night. The Giants conquered the Dragons, 92-88.



SPORT

TUDOR

Hot Coke takes on Magnolia

SUDDENLY, COCA-COLA HAS become the hottest team in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup.

Three games after bringing former MVP Art Tenorio into the fold, the Tigers have won back-to-back assignments and are now gunning for a third consecutive win, a welcome departure for a team that was once mired in a laughable eight-game slide.

Victories over Red Bull and Sta. Lucia have restored the Tigers' confidence, one that will be tested by the Magnolia Beverage Masters when both teams clash today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tenorio, acquired in a trade that sent Jiggy Ordoyo to Talk 'N Text, will again be in the middle of Coca-Cola's scheme of things, for reasons other than the countless ho-rosebloom in the slot shows.

"Art is amazing but what's really commendable about him are his energy and leadership," said Coca-Cola coach Bonky Davis, whose 3-6 record is half a step out of last place partly because of the Beverage Dragons' 13-99, 92-88 loss to Purefoods Sunday night.

Art [illegible] Alaska, two losses coming off defeats, engage in a four-race back-to-the-wire column right after the Magnolia-Coca-Cola battle.

The 6-foot-9 Tenorio has been the point of inspiration for a Tigers pack that was never given a second look at the start of the season.

"He's a big brother to his teammates, he comes in trying to push everybody even in practice," said Davis. "Even Nino [Dumendi and Dutch] Yuhu have been showing the way for the little guys since his arrival."

Chip by chip

Though John Arigo continued to suit a hyper-exercised elbow, Coca-Cola's top scorer was hardly missed the past two games as the veterans' enemy of Dumendi, Yuhu and Tenorio have rubbed off on the likes of Alex Cabagnot, Chester Tolentino and dynamic rookie Dongay Barreto.

Despite the mini-resurgence, the Tigers are still languishing in a deep hole.

"We have to go through that chip by chip to [cold them that] we have to do totally consistent to our objective," said Davis.

Coach Biel Thangalipoto said the Beverage Masters are coming off a 94-88 loss to Red Bull in a game they appeared to have under control until the end.

Magnolia's Three Sis...Jimmy Mirabeau, Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros—almost had the Beverage Masters celebrating until the aggressiveness of Red Bull's Jeordy Villanueva and the torrid shooting of Mick Pennisi and Carlos Cruz earned things reversed.

Magnolia is at 7-3, in a tie with six Alaska squad that is coming off a loss to Sta. Lucia a week ago. The foes top to rebound from that loss against the Express, who lost recently to the Barangay Ginebra Kings. *Jimar Sinsuan*

More Sports stories and SEA Games updates on A29 to 34

Aplus METRO

Metro braces for transport strike

Jeeps, buses off the road in other key cities also on Thursday

CATCHING A FEW WINKS
A soldier walks past his companions resting on the pavement outside the Makati City Hall as they wait for Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and others accused in the Oakwood mutiny trial to show up. AFP

By Rica T. Ochoa

COMMUTERS IN METRO MANILA AND KEY CITIES AND provinces nationwide should brace themselves for a nationwide transport strike on Thursday.

The strike will be spearheaded by militant groups Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Diliper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) and the Transport Forum against Oil Price Increase.

According to Piston secretary general George San Mateo, the nationwide protest was utilized as converging point messages to the government...to issue urgent oil price hikes and scrap the 12 percent expanded value-added tax on oil products.

Lastly, it should suspend the Oil Deregulation Law, or lower yet, control it alongside oil, he added.

San Mateo noted that the price of diesel has hit P50.80 per liter while gasoline is now priced at P45.77 per liter.

Affected areas apart from Metro Manila are Baguio City, Bulacan, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Batangas, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Catanduanes, Masbate, Region Occidental, Iloilo, Biliran, Roxas City, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao and General Santos City.

The transport strike in Iloilo, Aklan (Dec. 12 and 13) and Negros (Dec. 13 to 14) will last for two days, San Mateo said.

In Metro Manila, the brunt of the strike will be felt in designated tolls corners: The Alabang City southbut, Cubao in Quezon City, Port Grand Central in the Intramuros area, Balintawak corner Kamias and Philcoa in Quezon City, Arbanse Circle, Manila South Harbor, beside the Treasy Public Market in Rizal province and Montalban Bayan.

San Mateo said independent jeep, bus, and motorcycle operators and drivers would also join the protest.

Office messenger missing after encashing ₱4M in checks

By Kristine L. Alave

MAKI CITY POLICEMEN ARE LOOKING for an employee of the V. S. Soliven Group of Companies accused by his employers of stealing a large amount of cash last week.

PO2 Normal Bacolcolsa identified the suspect as Rigino Cruz, a messenger of the company and a resident of Sit. Fr. del Pilar in Pasay City.

According to the statement of Lenora Enrico, the company's assistant treasurer, their accused Cruz had Thursday to encash two checks worth P4M,700.

They also instructed him to deposit the money to a bank at the Ortigas Center and another one in Greenhills.

On Monday, Enrico said they received a call from one of the banks which informed them that they have yet to receive the money.

The company officer added that they also checked with the other bank in Ortigas Center and were told that there was no deposit made to their account last week.

According to Enrico, Cruz has not shown up for work since he went to the banks last week, triggering speculations that he might have run away with the money.

The police said they were investigating Cruz's background and his last known whereabouts.

With fixed payments that you can afford right now, there's no reason to wait for your dream home.
Introducing
BPI Family Savings Bank's Step UP Housing Loan

We offer you affordable amortization plans with fixed loan payments for 15 and 20-year terms.

Loan Term : 15 Years		Loan Term : 20 Years	
Amount	Payment Schedule	Amount	Payment Schedule
₱ 5,000	first 2 years	₱ 5,000	first 2 years
₱ 11,000	next 3 years	₱ 9,000	next 3 years
₱ 13,000	Remaining 11 years	₱ 12,500	Remaining 16 years

* Computation based on a ₱1,000,000 loan amount at a fixed 10-year term

For more information, call 845-6000, 754-6747, 754-6582, 754-6557 or 89-100. Text HOUSING<space>name<space>age<space>message and send to 0917-8910000 or 0918-8910000. Log on to bpifamilyonline.com or visit any BPI, BPI Family Savings Bank or Express Banking Center near you.

Initially available in Metro Manila and soon in the provinces.

Build your Dream

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
Just started an Investment

Escolarians, Come Home!

CALLING ALL CENTRO ESCOLAR UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AND
ALL GRADUATES BEFORE 1947—ROYAL DIAMOND JUBILARIANS!

1947—DIAMOND!
1952—EMERALD!
1957—GOLD!
1962—SAPPHIRE!
1967—RUBY!
1972—JADE!
1977—PEARL!
1982—SILVER!

COME AND RECEIVE YOUR GLITTERING AWARDS!
COME FOR THE SOUVENIR PICTURE TAKINGS!
FREE CENTENNIAL GIFT TO THE FIRST 100 JUBILARIANS!
TO SIGN UP AT THE CEU CENTENNIAL ALUMNI HOMECOMING REGISTRATION DESK
ON DECEMBER 15, 2007, AT 4 P.M.!
DECORATIONS OF PINE AROUND CEU
WON'T BE THE SAME CEU PINE WITHOUT YOU!
FOR DETAILS, CALL DR. PAZ I. LUCIDO, president, CEU Alumni Foundation Inc. 735-9662 or 736-9405 CALL NOW!

2 men accused of selling fake US dollars nabbed

By Tina G. Santos

TWO MEN WHO ALLEGEDLY tried to sell fake US dollars and Federal Reserve notes to a businessman have been arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents in Pasay City.

The two were identified as Sabiniano Dalili, 44, and George Celestial, 28, residents of Palanan province.

Both were charged with forging (money or bank notes and illegal possession and use of false treasury or bank notes in the Pasay City Prosecutor's Office.

The two were arrested on Nov. 20 but the NBI released the details of the case only yesterday upon receiving confirmation from a United States agent that the dollar bills offered for sale by the suspects were fake.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by Eli Mustapha, who claimed that the suspects offered to sell him—at an exchange rate of P1 for every US dollar—over $1 million in Federal Reserve notes and dollar bills.

The suspects then showed him the $1 million bills, several other dollar bills and federal reserve notes.

Sensing that the money being offered to him were fakes, Mustapha said he borrowed one of the bills and sent it to a relative in the United States for verification.

When his suspicion was confirmed, Mustapha went to the NBI, which immediately formed a team for an entrapment operation.

The businessman then called up the two suspects and pretended to be interested in buying the dollar bills from them. Mustapha agreed to meet them at the parking lot of the Centennial Airport, Terminal 2 in Pasay City last Nov. 20.

NBI operatives later seized the fake $1 million bills and Federal Reserve notes from the two suspects.

A certification issued by Virgil Beloid Jr., a special agent of the Department of Homeland Security based in Guam, said the US Treasury and Bureau of Engraving and Imprinting had never issued a $1 million bill.

Beabol added that federal reserve notes are never released to the public.

DID YOU KNOW

THE CELSIUS 9/11 is first released four, the 105-kilometer Manila-Dagupan line, opened to the public on May 24, 1892. The first train left Manila at 10:30 a.m. and arrived in Dagupan at 6 p.m. the same day. The line's operations ended in the 1980s.

Cyrill Almendrala
Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

Cop gets 20 years for illegal gun

SANDIGANBAYAN

A Sandiganbayan division has sentenced a former police officer to 20 years in prison for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

The Sandiganbayan Fifth Division found Rolando Dela Cruz guilty of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition in connection with the discovery of a .45 caliber pistol and ammunition in his house in Pasay City in 2004.

Dela Cruz was a member of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group when he was arrested.

The court also ordered Dela Cruz to pay a fine of P40,000.

Groceries for Pasig's poor

THE PASIG City government is handing out groceries to about 100,000 indigent residents starting tomorrow.

City Hall officials said pedicabs, tricycle drivers, market vendors, fishermen and other informal settlers will receive packages containing rice, canned goods, noodles, sugar, coffee, cooking oil, salt, soap and other basic necessities.

Mayor Robert Eusebio said the distribution will be completed in 10 days.

SK official to sit in City Council

DESPITE an ongoing investigation into allegations of vote-buying, the newly elected president of Manila's Sangguniang Kabataan Federation has qualified to be sworn in as the newest member of the City Council tomorrow.

Vice Mayor Isko Moreno said Councilor Ivan Uy, who is being investigated by the Commission on Elections, had told him that he was not guilty of the charges against him.

Uy was accused by several SK chairmen of vote buying, prompting Mayor Alfredo Lim to order the police to conduct an investigation.

"We don't have any personality not to accept him. We cannot deprive this group of their representative in the city council," said Moreno.

The SK chairmen, in their complaint to the police, claimed the younger Uy and the other members of his ticket gave them money and free concert tickets.

Jillian M. Lopez

No more lines.

Before

After

Auto Charge
The credit card company remits the payment to Meralco on or before the due date and in turn charges you through your credit card's monthly statement of account.

Visit www.meralco.com.ph or call 16211 for more details.

Let Meralco AutoPaid take care of you. Never miss a bill payment. Never get disconnected*. Never line up.

Auto Debit
The Meralco accredited bank automatically debits the bill amount from your account on the due date.

MERALCO AUTO PAID

"This season we give not gold, myrrh nor incense but maybe a bit of joy because we bring you the means to enjoy all of life's gifts. We're glad that you've always been our guiding star in our over 100 years of delivering reliable electric service. Merry Christmas!"

MERALCO

WORLD BRIEFS

Pakistan test-fires missile

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan successfully tested a cruise missile with a range of 700 km on Saturday, the military said. The military did not say on Tuesday if the Babr VII (Babur) missile is nuclear-capable but it has previously identified it as such. The test would consolidate Pakistan's strategic capability and strengthen national security, the military said in a statement. "The Babur, which has near stealth capabilities, is a low flying, terrain mugging missile with high maneuverability, pin point accuracy and inertial navigation systems," it said. Reuters

San Francisco sues ship owners

SAN FRANCISCO — The city filed a lawsuit on Monday claiming negligence by the owners and operators of the Hong Kong-based ship that caused fuel spills in an April in San Francisco Bay. The suit brought in San Francisco Superior Court by City Attorney Dennis Herrera alleges the cargo ship's owners and chief pilot John Cota violated California law by sailing the boat under dangerous conditions. It also maintains they failed to respond quickly enough to prevent a spill when the ship struck a bridge tower. AP

Lebanon polls postponed anew

BEIRUT — A parliamentary session in which a new president in Lebanon was postponed on Monday for an eighth time, until a new date set for Dec. 17, parliament speaker Nabih Berri said. "The office of the speaker has decided to postpone tomorrow's session to Dec. 17 according to Makram Sader's statement (on) the postponement was necessary" in order to allow for more consultation to agree on the election of a new president for the country," Ezeddine. AFP

Malaysian floods kill 6

KUALA LUMPUR — The death toll from widespread floods in Malaysia has risen to six and the number of people evacuated to relief centers increased sharply as heavy rains continued to fall, officials and reports said on Tuesday. A 15-year-old boy is thought to have drowned after he went swimming in a canal in north western Kelantan state. The official Bernama news agency reported. Singapore on Tuesday had reported four dead and three missing as the floods, which haunted three states in the peninsula. AFP

School shooting in India

NEW DELHI — A teenage student was killed on Tuesday when a classmate opened fire with a rifle at a school outside India's capital, private reports said. The shooting took place at a private boarding school in the suburb of Gurgaon, a senior police official, Satish Babar, told the CNN-IBN television news station. AP

Colorado shootings traced to one man

COLORADO SPRINGS — Two shootings at Christian centers in Colorado that left five people dead were most likely carried out by the same man, local media quoting police reported on Monday.

Teenage evidence found at the two crime scenes indicated that 24-year-old Matthew Murray, who was shot dead by a security guard after he opened fire at the New Life megachurch in Colorado Springs, was behind both attacks.

"Within the past 36 minutes, testing has confirmed that the handgun found at the church in Colorado Springs is forensically linked to shell casings found at the crime scene in Arvada," Arvada Police Chief Don White was quoted as saying by the Rocky Mountain News.

Murray's first attack claimed the lives of two workers at the Youth With a Mission training center in the Denver suburb of Arvada, in the early hours of Sunday morning. Police said Murray had been dismissed from the center in 2002 and they were probing the circumstances surrounding his sacking.

Roughly 12 hours after the attack on the missionary center, Murray opened fire at the New Life church in Colorado Springs, some 120 kilometers away, as thousands of people gathered at the facility for Sunday worship. AFP

Patience running out with Burma, says UN

BANGKOK — THE INTERNATIONAL community's "patience is running out" with military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) and has struggled even to reassure friendly democracy, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Monday.

"I hope the Burmese authorities will take it very seriously," Ban said during a visit to Thailand, where he urged the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), of which the former Burma is a member, to play a "special political role."

"The people of Burma have suffered from isolation for such a long time and it is high time now for the Burmese authorities and people to be able to enjoy genuine democracy and genuine integration in the international community," Ban said.

En route to a climate change conference in Bali, Ban said he would continue with the mission of his special envoy Ibrahim Gambari, to bring the generals to the negotiating table with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Gambari has visited twice since September's bloody crackdown against major pro-democracy protests in which the UN says up to 4,000 people were arrested and at least 31 killed...never does the trip mean the junta's officials roll.

He has held meetings with Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi and junta supremo Than Shwe, although so far the only concrete result of his visits has been the appointment of another general to act as go-between for the pair.

UN first lady Lama Hash, an outspoken critic of Burma's junta's crackdown on protesters, and ex- International Human Rights officials said Ky Cynthia Maung, the founder of a clinic along the Thai-Burma border.

"President Bush and I call on all nations...especially Burma's neighbors—to use their influence to help bring about a democratic transition," Lama Hash said. Reuters

First regular train service links North, South Korea

DORASAN STATION — North and South Korea on Tuesday began a regular train service across their fortified border for the first time in over 50 years, in the latest rare cross-frontiers project between the Stalinist enemies.

A locomotive pulling 10 container trucks loaded with hot briquettes and raw material for shoe factories traveled north across the frontier to Munsan station near an inter-Korean industrial complex at Kaesong.

It later returned to the South carrying shoes, garments and machinery products stored in the closed-funded complex just north of the border.

The daily freight service is the first tangible achievement of an inter-Korean summit in October, which agreed on a variety of sweeping projects to promote peace and economic engagement.

The last regular rail operation was in 1951, during the 1950-53 Korean War.

The hope is that one day the railway will also carry passengers and act as the first link with Europe via the trans-China and trans-Siberian networks.

"We are rethinking the last war that has been severed for 56 years," said Lee Chul, president of state operator Korail.

"It looks like a humble start but this is the first step to Europe through the trans-Siberian railway," he told reporters at Dorasan station, last stop on the South Korean side before the frontier.

Trains made rare cross-border test runs in May to relax the South halted as a highly symbolic event. But delays in obtaining safety guarantees from the North's military had delayed the launch of a regular service.

Trains are restricted to a maximum speed of 60 km per hour when traversing the closely guarded frontier.

"This is a dream come true," said driver Min Jong-Chul, who also drove one of the trains on the test runs.

"I'm happy to drive this train to the North where both my parents were born. I hope we can expand the tourists as well soon as this train to go back and forth."

During the summit North Korea offered help to restore the North's dilapidated railway system up to the border with China.

Apart from its symbolic value in linking two nations still technically at war, Seoul hopes the train will eventually slash transport costs for the factories at Kaesong.

Some 20,000 North Koreans earning about $60 a month produce clothes, utensils, watches and other goods for South Korean firms. Seoul sees Kaesong as a model for projects to narrow the huge wealth gap in preparation for eventual reunification. AFP

THE first regular South Korean cargo train returns from North Korea at the Jonjigang Station in Paju, north of Seoul, Dec. 11. REUTERS

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Chanco

US ice storm blacks out 600,000 homes

KILLER ICE Cars lie trapped under fallen branches after an ice storm in eastern Oklahoma County on Monday, Dec. 10. AP

OKLAHOMA CITY—A WINTRY STORM CAKED America's center with a thick layer of ice, blacking out more than 600,000 homes and businesses, and more icy weather was on the way. At least 18 deaths in Oklahoma and Missouri were blamed on the conditions, with 15 of them killed on slick highways.

A state of emergency was declared in all of Oklahoma, where the sheer weight of branches snapping under the weight of the ice schooled through Oklahoma City.

"You can hear them falling everywhere," Lenore Compton said on Monday as he shoveled ice off his driveway.

The National Weather Service posted ice and winter storm warnings on Tuesday for parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois. Missouri declared an emergency on Sunday and put the National Guard on alert.

Oklahoma utilities said a half-million consumers were blacked out as power lines snapped under the weight of ice and falling tree branches, the biggest power outage for winter blizzard and utilities in Missouri said more than 100,000 homes and business had no power.

"If you do the math, probably one out of three Oklahomans has no electricity at this point," said Gil Rowden, a spokesperson for Oklahoma Gas & Electric, the state's largest utility.

Roughly 11,000 customers were blacked out in southern Illinois and more than 5,000 had no electric lines or lights in Kansas, where Gov. Kathleen Sebelius declared a statewide state of emergency.

At O'Hare International Airport, about 300 flights were cancelled on Monday, with delays of about 45 minutes, said Chicago Department of Aviation spokesperson Karen Pride. About a dozen flights were cancelled at Midway Airport, and a handful of flights were delayed about an hour, she said.

Ice was as much as 2 1/2 centimeters thick on tree limbs and power lines in parts of the region.

Schools across Oklahoma were closed and some hospitals were relying on backup power generators. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers sent 50 generators and three truckloads of bottled water from Texas to distribution to blacked-out areas of Oklahoma.

Tulsa International Airport had no power for about 10 hours and halted flight operations for the day, and more incoming flights at Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City were canceled because of icy runways. AP

Media tycoon Black sentenced to 6.5 years in jail

CHICAGO—SHACKLED MEdia tycoon Conrad Black was sentenced to six and a half years in jail on Monday for misleading his company's corbors and trying to cover up his crimes.

"You've committed a very serious crime, Mr. Black," Judge Amy St. Eve told the former media mogul as she imposed the jail term as well as a fine of $125,000.

Black was also ordered to forfeit some $6.1 million to the government, some of which could be distributed to victims.

"I literally cannot understand how someone of your stature could engage in the conduct you engaged in." It was a spectacular fall for the debon Black, 63, who continues to proclaim innocence and vows to return to professional life despite being found guilty on four counts of fraud and one of obstruction of justice.

Some of his supporters have portrayed Black as a man betrayed by his chums allies and criminalized by overzealous prosecutors. Others have likened him to Orson Welles's film character Citizen Kane.

Black, who did not testify at trial, spoke briefly before his sentencing of his disappointment and regret that the empire he built from the ground up had collapsed after he was ousted.

"I do wish to express very profound regret and sadness at the severe hardship suffered by all the shareholders, including employees, by the evaporation of $3.95 billion in shareholder value under my successors," he said.

The judge ordered him on a bond, giving him 12 weeks to sort out his affairs before reporting to prison, sometime early in 2008.

The son of a wealthy brewery executive, Black bought his first newspaper in his twenties and rapidly expanded his reach across the globe, buying such prestigious titles as the Daily Telegraph, the Jerusalem Post and the Chicago Sun-Times.

Black's willingness to flaunt his wealth and privileges, his conservative views and his buoyant business acumen alienated his more self-effacing fellow Canadians long before he renounced his citizenship to become a British lord in 2000.

The ostentatious Lord Black of Crossharbour was known for throwing lavish parties and rubbing celebrities, socialists and statesmen among his friends AFP

BLACK

Iraq rejects US bases

BAGHDAD—IRAQ WILL NEV er allow the United States to keep permanent military bases on its soil, the government's national security adviser has said.

"We need the United States in our war against terrorism, we need them to guard our border sometimes, we need them for economic support and we need them for diplomatic and political support," Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said.

"But I say one thing, permanent bases or bases in Iraq for any foreign forces is a red line that cannot be accepted by any nationalist Iraqi," he said, speaking to Dubai-based al-Arabiya television in an interview broadcast late on Monday.

The United States has around 160,000 troops in Iraq, officially under a United Nations mandate enacted after the US-led invasion in 2003.

Iraq formally asked the United Nations on Monday to renew that mandate for a year until the end of 2008, saying that it would not extend it beyond next year, and that the transition could be reached sooner as Iraq's experts Reuters

Malaysia detains Anwar, arrests 12 protesters

KUALA LUMPUR—POLICE also used batons on Tuesday to disperse opposition figure Anwar Ibrahim at the capital's airport and arrested at least 12 protesters who clashed a ban on handing a petition to parliament.

The incidents were the latest moves in a government crackdown on dissidents who have organized a series of street demonstrations that have drawn tens of thousands and sent shockwaves through the ruling coalition.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said on Monday he saw nothing to sacrifice public freedom to maintain national security justifying the arrests of dozens of people on charges including attempted murder and sedition.

Anwar, the former deputy premier who became a vocal government critic after being sacked and jailed in 1998, said he was held for an hour at Kuala Lumpur's international airport (KLIA) after returning from a trip to Turkey.

"I was detained by immigration officials at KLIA this morning and told to note that the authorities have placed my name on a 'no-fly blacklist,'" he said.

"I think it is a sustained effort to harass opposition leaders," he added, describing the crackdown as a government attempt "to deflect from the core issues of economic corruption, high crime rates and a poor economy." An immigration spokesperson said he had no knowledge of Anwar's detention at the airport, but that names for the blacklist are usually provided by police.

Rosdihar officials said however that the move was linked to his involvement in the Bersih electoral reform movement which staged a mass rally last November as well as Tuesday's petition protest.

More than 4000 police surrounded the parliament to block the electoral reform campaigners who were forced to march there on foot after all roads leading to the building were closed off, causing traffic chaos in Kuala Lumpur.

Police said 12 people had been arrested, including seven of members of Anwar's Keadilan party and one from the hardline Islamic party PAS, while Keadilan said 31 had been detained, including a 13-year-old boy. AFP

PUTIN'S PICK

Russian President Vladimir Putin named First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev as his preferred candidate in the March 2 presidential polls called to mind a successor after the Kremlin leader steps down.

Dmitry Medvedev Born March 14, 1965

Putin anoints longtime ally as presidential frontrunner

MOSCOW—PRESIDENT VLADImir Putin endorsed technocratic ally Dmitry Medvedev as his successor on Monday in a surprise announcement that should clear the way for the Kremlin leader to retain power behind the throne.

Putin, whose support is seen as virtually guaranteeing victory in a March 2, 2008, presidential election, threw his weight behind Medvedev, a longtime ally who chairs gas behemoth Gazprom, and serves as first deputy prime minister.

The choice surprised observers because Medvedev is a relative liberal in the Kremlin and unlike most of Putin's allies is not known to have served in the Soviet KGB. Although viewed in the media as a possible successor he has never suggested he wanted the job.

"I have known him for more than 17 years, I have worked with him closely all these years, and I completely and fully support this candidacy," Putin said on state-run Channel One after four political parties nominated Medvedev.

In Washington the White House shrugged off questions about the appointment, with spokesperson Dana Perino telling reporters it was an "internal matter."

The nomination followed months of intrigue over who would succeed 55-year old Putin when he steps down next year after two four-year terms at the head of the nuclear power and leading global energy exporter.

"On March 2, 2008, Medvedev will become the third president of Russia," news site newsgazeta.ru wrote.

Analysts said the choice of the baby-faced Medvedev, 42, would help Putin keep his options open for retaining authority.

Options considered most likely for Putin include becoming prime minister, heading the Kremlin Security Council, or even taking over as chief of a new state overthrowing Russia and co-rioter to public Belarus—which Putin is due to visit Thursday and Friday.

Heading a program of government-backed projects, Medvedev is outside the circle of hard-talk officials dominating the Kremlin and he owes his stellar career to Putin.

"Medvedev is compatible of forming his own clan and he will always need Putin," Yury Krupnyakh, at the Indem Wazadis foundation, said.

Vladimir Pribylovsky at the Panorama think tank, said Medvedev was loyal and "guarantees Putin the status quo."

The Moscow stock market's RTS index rose 1.62 percent to 2,333.37 points on the news, while shares in state-owned Gazprom, the world's biggest gas company, shot up three percent.

Alexei Malashenko, at the Moscow Carnegie Centre, said that Putin could still allow a rival candidate to emerge. "It's not the last surprise of this presidential campaign."

However, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said such a development was "unlikely. Putin's quite openly gave his support to one candidate."

Boris Nemtsov, one of the leaders of Russia's embattled liberal opposition, attacked Medvedev's nomination as "humiliating for the people, when the authorities determine who needs to be appointed," Interfax reported.

Most observers had been expecting Putin to give his choice until Monday when his United Russia party, which swept to a near-constitutional landslide in elections last weekend.

Putin took pains to emphasize the support from Medvedev from four parties—United Russia, A Just Russia, the Agrarians and the Civic Force.

"This gives a chance to create the conditions for carrying out the course that has brought results all these last eight years," Putin said. AFP

Fujimori claims he's innocent of charges

LIMA—FORMER PRESIDENT Alberto Fujimori angrily denied ordering death squads to kill suspected leftists in Peru's civil war as he went on trial on Monday and said he saved the country from the threat of communism.

"I reject the charges entirely. I'm innocent," Fujimori shouted angrily while pounding at a panel of Chile's Supreme Court judges.

Fujimori, 69, is accused of sending a military death squad to carry out the La Cantuta massacre, in which 10 people were snatched from a university, murdered and buried in a shallow grave in 1992 in allegedly collaboration with left-wing guerrilla.

He is also on trial for two kidnappings and the Barrios Altos massacre in 1991, when 15 people were gunned down at a family barbecue, among them an 8-year-old boy.

The normally composed Fujimori appeared tense from the sixth-floor courtroom where he was arraigned to answer the charges.

He is also on trial for two kidnappings and the Barrios Altos massacre in 1991, when 15 people were gunned down at a family barbecue, among them an 8-year-old boy.

The normally composed Fujimori appeared tense from the sixth-floor courtroom where he was arraigned to answer the charges.

He is also on trial for two kidnappings and the Barrios Altos massacre in 1991, when 15 people were gunned down at a family barbecue, among them an 8-year-old boy.

FUJIMORI

"Absolute hypocrisies."

Fujimori faces up to 30 years in prison and $15 million in fines if found guilty. He tried it in exotic barracks where the former president is being held and is ordered to resume on Wednesday.

Fujimori took power in 1990, when a Maoist insurgency known as the Shining Path were trying to take over the country.

His supporters say it is unfair to prosecute a man who ended the vicious guerrilla war and tamed a chaotic economy during his decade-long rule.

But human rights activists view the televised trial as a turning point in a country long saddled by weak judicial system, impunity for the powerful, and painful memories of a civil war that killed tens of thousands of people. Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
13 RP finalists defend boxing titles vs Thai foes /A30

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy B. Molmisa Jr. Assistant Editor Frances T. J. Ochoa

DEMOS Ely and Cecil Mamit discuss a few points on the way to beating the Malaysian pair of Rohaniza and Jawad Isk Noordin in the mixed doubles, 6-2, 7-5.

Swimmers shine again but RP still 5th overall

JAMES Walsh acknowledges the gallery after nailing the men's 200m butterfly gold.

Filipinos snare 2 cycling golds

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—Parading another star in Fil-American JB Walsh, swimming matched the two-gold effort by cycling as the Philippines finished with seven victories Tuesday that did little to get the defending overall champion Philippines out of its fifth place hole Tuesday in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Walsh smashed the 16-year-old SEAG record in riding the men's 200-meter butterfly then combined with Miguel Molina, Ryan Arabejo and new DP swim setter Jonel Conkley to secure the sport's final gold in the men's 4x100 individual medley. That capped the Filipinos' eight victories overall.

Former Sibuhatnon King Victor Kaintin finally realized the veterans' dude for the first time in three SEAG by topping the 40-kilometer points race late Monday and defending champion Alfie Catalan kept his 4-km individual pursuit title.

Feliciano Nestor Jr. salvaged a gold for athletics in the men's 800 runners, Amaya the retained her women's composite individual title in archery and the men's open squad scored anew as the Filipinos boosted their golden harvest to 29 with four days of competition left.

But the Filipinos missed two golds behind Malaysia which captured a pair of golds at the start of the final swim program to leap fourth place. Indonesia was cards with 24 winners.

As of 8:30 p.m., host 19-20 years, in Manila, the Thais moved closer to their overall target of 120 victories with 97 gold medals. Vietnam was glued in second with 66 followed by Singapore with 37.

Walsh shattered by 1.39 seconds the SEAG record of 2:01.39 set by Malaysia's Anthony Ang in 2001 in Kuala Lumpur.

Molina's individual winning streak earlier

Make way for new RP gold machine

By Marvyn B. Carrillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—ITTIP soho works, more swi athletics.

Swimming became the new gold medal machine of the Philippine contingent when Miguel Molina and his mates Southern wowed the country with eight victories in the one meet held on the sport Sunday in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

After winning only four golds back home in the 2005 Games, the swimmers doubled that output here with the 22-year old Molina shooting his ways to four victories—three in the individual events and one in the relay—to cop his most successful nine in three editions of the biennial event.

Now each time overall wins since the Vietnam SEAG in 2003, the UE-based Molina is thinking of retiring from the sport with his young teammates here assuring him of their own gold-winning ways.

All in their teens, Ryan Arabejo, Jasmel Coakley and JR Welch accounted for four gold medals among themselves with the 18-year-old Arabejo grabbing for two in the 200-meter backstroke and the 1,500 freestyle.

Swi Best swimmer

Welch delivered in the 200-meter fly while Coakley, two days short of turning 16, crowned himself as the youngest swimmer of them all by cutting the 50-meter freestyle and breaking the SEAG and national records in 23.0 seconds. That time also qualified him for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Together with Molina, the three picked up another gold in the 4 x 100 medley relay with a time of 3:49.10.

Gold 200 freestyle rival

Molina earlier prevailed in the 400 and 200 individual medley and the 200 breaststroke, the same event which he captured two years ago. His win in the relay came after he had carded his third in the 200 freestyle won by his old rival Malaysian Daniel Bego.

"I just wanted to keep it close [in the breaststroke leg] knowing that Welch and Coakley were unbeatable," said Molina of his training to be used by today.

Welch, 18, clocked 2:00.45 to be honored back from a narrow loss to Indonesian Danny Utomo the last time around.

Naturalized swimmer

Singapore, with the help of naturalized swimmers from China, emerged overall champion with 31 golds, but RP's eight was a big boost as it easily surpassed athletics' five-gold haul and weightlifting's two golds.

In the 2007 Manila SEAGE, weightlifters garnered 21 golds and athletics nine.

The Rajdamnern Centre-Philippine team shoots for its third straight win against Malaysia while the outmatched lady cheaters go up against their Malaysian counterparts Wednesday.

HOT GOLDS: Miguel Molina celebrates after RP's 4x100 relay victory. RON CASTRO

13 RP finalists defend boxing title vs Thai foes

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—CAN THE RP boxing team, which fielded only its second-ranked men's squad, upset highly favored Thailand in a championship showdown and help revive hopes of defending champion Philippines' hold on at least third overall in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here?

The 17-strong RP boxing team won in three more winners to make it a total of 13 boxers—seven men and six women—in the gold-medal round, shining not only their strengths but also their 4.3-1 change at the close of the semifinal round on Tuesday.

However, all 13 Filipino finalists will be up against top-seed rivals from Thailand's finest, which was a perfect 11-for-11 in moving to the final round that starts at the Muaythai Municipal Stadium on Wednesday.

With 10 fighters already in the finals, lightweight Jairo Canizares avenged Quoc Viet Tran of Vietnam, 20-13, lastly lightweight Jeepers Ladon muscled Mohamad Fauhan Hamsudin, 10-2, and light heavyweight Maximino Villaruperan rolled past Lemton Geographi Lualdarong, 13-8, to complete the finals run for the RP team.

Despite the strong charge, signs of what to expect in the men's division's gold-medal shootout between RP and Thailand surfaced yesterday with the swashbuckling ruffeol by light flyweight Albert Pabila at the hands of Asian heavyweight, 8-18.

In two-on-five bouts against Thai opponents, welterweight Wilfredo Lopez was stopped cold in the first round, while flyweight Bill Viernes was outwhelmed and outclassed in three rounds.

There's a greater chance of the RP women boxers—majority of them champions in the 2005 Games—landing gold medals in the six finals contests they attempted with Thai foes.

This could not, however, be said of the RP men finalists, which were culled from the initiative Team B after officials decided to pull out fighters that included Olympian qualifier Harry Tañamor.

With its strong punch to the final round, hopes are now pinned on the RP boxing team to deliver the gold medals to boost the RP delegation's desperate bid to salvage at least a third here finish.

The fielding of a weaker men's squad here was seen as one big step backward in RP boxing team's defense of its championship in the biennial Games.

THE PHILIPPINES' Jeepin Ladon lands a punch against Pannarales Pimlico of Thailand. RON CASTRO

RP batters eye 3rd win vs Burmese today

Tie standings: Thailand 2-0; **Philippines** 2-0; Indonesia 2-1; Myanmar 1-0; Malaysia 1-2; Cambodia 0-3

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

BANGKOK—THAILAND, THE ONCE THRONE TO the Philippines' baseball reign in Southeast Asian Games, ranged in its third straight victory to grab the solo lead with a 6-1 win over Burma (Myanmar) on Tuesday at the Queen Sirikit Sports Complex.

The Thais needed a four-run explosion in the sixth inning to forge ahead of the Filipinos, who are supposed to match their 2-0 start against the Burmese squad in the first game of a double-header on Wednesday.

Malaysia won the day's other match, turning back a fighting Cambodian side, 11-7, behind a seven-run explosion in the fifth frame.

The Filipinos were beaten by the hosts in the same fashion last year but remain the solid favorites here as they still have to yield a run while amassing a total of 45 in two games that they decided after only five innings.

They [illegible] with a 31-0 thrashing of Malaysia Friday before whipping Cambodia, 14-3, Monday.

In contrast, the Thais had to scramble past Indonesia, 6-5, although they also bombed the Cambodians with an abbreviated 18-0 win.

After Myanmar, the Filipinos take on the Indonesians on Thursday before going up against the Thais in an improved winner-take-all showdown on Friday.

Big RP gold heroes sizzle in from the kitchen

BAKE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—PART A lot of spicy news about the dishes making Philippine sports reunion to this placid, charming capital?

Misbehaving may not be aware of it, but one gaddish team of Filipino chefs was allegedly responsible for the overall at the crowded meet hall of the Ahlens Village here.

That medal, being unofficial, can once throw RP up in the rugged race for overall honors but, before grateful performers in the nation's finest basketry start packing the loch again, please give our chefs and nutritionists from University of Santo Tomas and College of St. Benilde a round of applause.

Take it from Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco, who confirmed that lavender Filipino dishes prepared by RP chefs were being consciously patronized by foreign contingents.

* * *

In fact, Cojuangco reported with unconcealed glee how Filipinos athletes complained about the unavailability of their favorite native dishes, like adobo and tinola, upon their return to the Village from various competition fields.

Manipaqui Arroyo, was not very surprised when RP swimmers delivered not just two, but three shining golds [illegible] the pool on Monday.

For the record, Pacuncello had told members of the Filipino media here that, since they [illegible] the chance of winning overall title, his faculty, Ms. Arroyo, would be glad enough with a runner-up finish.

Or maybe, even only a third here in the overall medal standings.

* * *

Prepare to be floored. But Pacuncello had a rude awakening upon reading the medal tally the morning after.

The Philippines had slipped to a silent fifth overall in the medal standings.

* * *

Well, as things stood close to the end of competitions on Tuesday, RP finishing a poor third behind Thailand and sometimed Vietnam could be considered commendable.

The fifth, Pacuncello confessed, was that RP would need a few minor miracles in order to achieve a third overall finish in this biennial test of lineage and sporting supremacy.

Singapore yesterday appeared [illegible] with its strong punch to the final round, hopes are now pinned on the RP boxing team to deliver the gold medals to boost the RP delegation's desperate bid to salvage at least a third here finish.

The fielding of a weaker men's squad here was seen as one big step backward in RP boxing team's defense of its championship in the biennial Games.

Secondly, they were already preparing alibis for the impending debacle.

Pacuncello was himself overheard at eating lunch had been uneven for their respective teams.

Their woes into this wild shot going to boxing which, it was said, could've helped grandly in the light heavyweight finals [illegible] instead of fielding gasping members of its Class D team.

He told, this scenario which was supposed to show the right direction: RP sports had supposedly taken following its triumph in the 2005 Games, has deteriorated into another third, echoing diagnosis of national sporting ills.

The situation was so rotten Interpassed RP sports officials have had to drum up the endless, solemn efforts of undersized Filipino chefs in the Ahlens Village.

Our biggest hopes out here may yet emerge from the kitchen.

Filipino medalists (As of Dec. 10, 2007)

RP swimmers shine again...

From page A10

ended at three as he settled for the bronze in the men's 200 freestyle. But he was a winner when he plunged into action for the last time as the swimmer of the breaststroke leg.

Medina finished with one more victory than his golden output in 2005 to become the most successful RP campaigner so far.

Ryan Arabejo, the 200 and 1,500 freestyle winners, took care of the backstroke. Vilma swept the butterfly and 100m freestyle duumpire Coakley finished off the relay in style.

Boxing, now under pressure to deliver and help avoid an embarrassing finish for the 51-nation, placed three more fighters in the finals for a total of 11.

Arguello, however, lost the bitterness used as his shot knockout wins against their Thai foes in the gold medal round starting Wednesday to avoid the infamous hometown decision here.

Bantamweight Jozel Contreras, lightweight Jorgen Ladon and light heavyweight Alamin Tejahan joined Arguello in the finals of Asiandex after light fly Albert Pabilo was eliminated by Thai Aroon Daorueang, 10-0.

The other gold medal hopefuls are flyweight Godfrey Gaoiran, light welter Jerry Sorolfloro, featherweight Orlando Tacoyan, middleweight Jayne Yavon and female fighters Irene Albacea, Aljun Tabi and Mitchelle Martinez and Perajoy Solis.

There was mixed results in golf with the women's team, led by Anya Tanpinco, taking a two-stroke lead over Thailand after the first round of the 54-hole competition, 145-145.

But the Philippine Cup champion Thais bounced back in the team's division, opening a six-shot edge over Indonesia, 922-928, even as the RP-Ipines, who led on the first day, tumbled down to fourth at 929 with Anthony Fernando adding a 77 to the 72 of Mark Fernando and the 72 of Ferdinand Asuncion.

Hentiu, whose father was a former national standout in the jumping events, succeeded teammate Amat Ang to 400 champion with a time of 46.16. Jimie Candelaria, the winner in Vietnam in 2004, slumped to sixth in 48.89.

That area gave the athletics team its greatest output of four in three SEAGs. The squad came up with eight golds in Vietnam and nine in 2005 back home.

The host Indonesians Delki Theresyadinda for the gold, 116-114, while the open squad won with a team featuring Alfonsis Veronica, who took over the old slot of actor Richard Gomez, Armando Bernal, Wilfredo Hicarena Jr. and Avelino Fernandez.

But the fencing squads in foil and sabre ended up with silvers.

Also catching fire the silver were Earl Benjamin Ilig in the men's compound individual, ex-archery pole-vaulter Gerlando Gamores and weightlifting's Hercares Ferraren in the 94 kg.

COUNTRY	G	S	B	TOTAL
Thailand	87	67	71	225
Indonesia	85	59	68	212
Malaysia	27	35	35	97
Singapore	27	35	35	97
Philippines	11	16	17	44
Vietnam	10	16	40	66
Myanmar	9	9	9	27
Laos	0	1	5	6
Brunei	0	1	1	2
Cambodia	0	0	1	1

Nierras ends athletics rout

By Marvey R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Julius Nierras made up for the shock defeat of Benjito Fruelado in the javelin by sizing the 400-meter run as the close of the athletics competition at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here on Tuesday.

After topping his semifinal heat on Monday, Nierras, ace of a former national jumper, clocked 46.36 seconds in a wild, wild finish to nip Jullanjit Rujaroen (46.61) of Thailand for his first SEAG gold.

Mohamad Zaidul Faisal Abidin of Malaysia was third (46.78), while Jimie Candelaria, the 2003 king of this event, was sixth in 46.89.

Nierras' victory put the PP athletics gold harvest at five at His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary Stadium here—well short of the promised 10 gold medals.

The heavily favored Fruelado, who was trying to win for the third straight Games, drafted up 66.14 meters in his fourth try and settled for second as Thai Sarya Bamrungsa's 60.65, Nuanach Rainrapee made it a Thai 1-3 after throwing 67.76.

There were more failures than success on the final day for the Filipinos and Julius Lunada in three Herrera scored up fifth and sixth, respectively, in the 1,500 meter finals won by Mohtar's Ilfitz Ganap Ngoyen in 3:45.31.

Meanwhile, Ma. Abigail was knocked off her 52.000 throw by her 52.000 throw by a last-meeting Indonesian Triyaningsih, who won in 34:07.31.

Manipol clocked 10:40.37 with the veteran Pe. Pe. of Myanmar finishing second in 39:39.98.

NIERRAS

Athletics finished with six gold, seven silver and 11 bronze medals, a far cry from the nine golds it outlined to the Philippines' nations overall comp in Manila two years ago, but respectable enough according to track officials.

"Though we fell a little short of target, I am very proud of my athletes who fought hard for the country," Manila head Go Teng Bok, said.

Filipinos also joined the record-shattering frenzy, with Henry Dagmil shading his 2005 long jump mark of 7.61 with a golden leap for 7.87. Monday afternoon and Arnel Pedrosa rebooting the hammer in a distance of 60.66 meters for another new SEAG mark.

Tanpinco's 70 lifts RP ladies; men drop to 4th

By Marvey R. Castillo

NONGNOOA RANCH RESORT—THE Philippine team's best sportsmen on the second day of golf action in the 24th Southeast Asian Games, chalking up just a combined 220 to deepen of the lead to fourth place, now seven behind the hot Thailand squad.

Mark Fernando bounced back from a mediocre opening round with a one-under 70 for 71 and Ferdinand Asuncio was steady with a 72, but the Filipinos had to count a 77 by Anthony Fernando to add to Thailand's 72 by Sathon Sirawatchaiyakorn Anthony Fernando for a two-day aggregate of 429.

Saving the day for the Philippines was the women's team, which assembled a 145 both around veterans Anya Tanpinco's 70—good for the lead in both team and individual plays at the long, windswept Nongnooa Golf and Country Club here.

"We all played bad," Mark Fernando, one of two National Coaches' Open graduates in the all-rookie team, said for Filipinos. "At least we still have time to catch up."

As all fours were the Filipinos shot Jerod Abalos, who had a 91 on Monday, shot to a 79 and failed to count.

Thailand, which won the Peter Cup at The Country Club in Bria Bona, Laguna two weeks ago, finished with a flourish with its last three players shooting a combined seven under to the last three holes.

Pinyarong Thanwatee finished birdie-birdie-eagle for his 66 and Chaiyabhurawat birdied his last two holes for a 67, which outdueled the 71 of Varee Chomchalee, who finished the last hole as well.

Still in the hunt

"It's far from over," said non-playing skipper Cuby Goodwills. "Seven down to a team competition is not that impossible to overhaul."

Sirawatchaiyakorn united the lead with 198s, one up on Atolli Mandolia, whose 71 led Indonesia's 224 for joint second with Malaysia at 430.

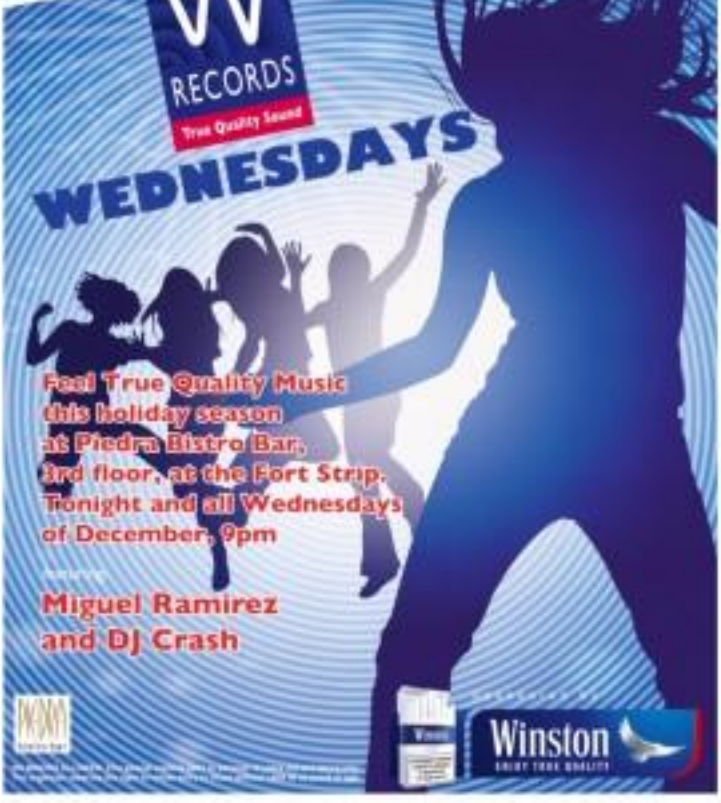
Malaysia rattled in a 230 on the strength of Mohmad Ali's 70.

Fajardo Bonicia and Hadilio counted for Indonesia with 75s, while Malaysia drew a 72 from A.M. Nazrul and a 74 from Abdul Shukor Ismail.

Tanpinco, a member of the silver medal-winning Philippine team of 2005, actually made the turn at 35—only to drop one shot in her final nine holes. She took a one-shot lead over P. Bhongkuphan of Thailand in individual play.

Chihiro Ikeda backed up Tanpinco with a 75 and stunned in the country's 145 while Y Rawitpokorn turned in a 74 for the second Thailand score for in 145.

The Philippines threw away flights in Gunman's 77 while Thailand discarded the 76 of P Phanmanoharitrong to only tame of the three scores count for team play in the 54-hole event. Indonesia was isolated with a 147 after the 72 of T Astuti Suharto and Anya Lydia Fonna's 74.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Catalan, Espiritu bag cycling golds

VICTOR Espiritu (right) tows Stephen Pelaez in the 40km points race. JAY LUCAS

By Mueng R. Castillo

SUBIC BAY, Philippines—OLIVIER CATALAN WON THE PHILIPPINES' THIRD cycling gold in the 24th Southeast Asian Games Tuesday night after riding the men's individual pursuit at the velodrome of the Ric Majestry the King's 40th Birth Anniversary Main Stadium here.

Aboard a P120,000 bike, the 25-year-old Cantabe was timed four minutes and 48.220 seconds for the 4,000-meter race, an effort that left no doubt that he won the gold medal Monday night when Hene Espiritu captured before winning the 40-km points race.

Arat Mustafa Bash of Malaysia was second to Catalan, the pre-event favorite, in 4:49.394, while Pyanje Khanyin of Indonesia was the bronze medalist in 4:58.871.

"This is for the country," Catalan told reporters in Filipino.

The cycling delegation already surpassed its two gold harvest in Manila two years ago and continued to improve, with Jerry Bolos sparking a Philippine charge on Thursday by upending a Thai foe in the downhill mountain bike race.

Espiritu, who had a total of 30 points, had to wait for almost an hour after the race into Monday night as Philippine team officials battled it out with James Ivenson of a rousing attempt to rob the Filipino of his win.

Catalan's gold was the second in as many days for cycling and in third for the Philippines in these Games counting Jimbert Bandrayup's downhill championship last week.

The 32-year-old Espiritu had scored 16 points for a second SEA Games gold.

"How sweet it is," Espiritu, the Team Philippine champion last summer, said in Filipino. "This is even sweeter than my first win. I've waited so long for this."

In the 1997 Jakarta Southeast Asian Games, Espiritu handily topped the individual time trials.

Espiritu, who won the Marlboro Tour in 1996, teamed back two Tours for the gold. Prajak Mahawong grabbed the silver with 61 points and Thanawat the bronze (74).

Espiritu, optioned away right from the start and with teammates Stephen Pelaez and Ronald Gonzales providing splendid defensive help, he overlapped the entire field twice.

Marina Bitos, who settled for the bronze medal in the mountain bike cross-country and finally individual time trial, was still seeing action in the women's 30-km points race event late Tuesday evening.

Cycling's other medals came from Gianlito Quiñones (silver in men's cross-country) and the bronze medals of Mitchelton in men's cross-country and Jan Ibel Morales in men's 1-kilometer.

Espiritu said his win Monday was made possible because of his vast experience culled from a national pool elite that started when he was a junior rider in 1992.

"One event is hard to predict because it depends on our condition," Espiritu said in Filipino. "Maybe five to top form or maybe I'm simply lucky."

Espiritu is currently looking forward to Thursday's road race, where he will team up with Warren Bravadillo, Irish Manzanilla and Lloyd Reynante.

Confident RP cagers clash with Malaysians

SAMUEL HUGNADEUSSY
7 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (W)
9 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (M)

By Mueng R. Castillo

SUBIC BAY, Philippines—WITH ITS biggest crumbling block out of the way, the banged Philippine men's basketball team starts going through the motions of qualifying its women as king of the sport in the Southeast Asian Games.

The Filipinos drag it out with Malaysia at 5 p.m. Wednesday (5 p.m. Manila time) at the Rizal Memorial Stadium here, and they are expected to worry to their third straight blowout win and move within a victory of a title sweep.

But don't tell that to the coaching staff of the well-prepared squad.

"Our frame of mind remains the same," Jeanel Bacsh said during a break in practice on Sunday. "We will treat all our opponents with respect. We don't want to be complacent."

Malaysia will come into the game the winner of two of its five three games, the last a 100-72 bombardment of Cambodia on Tuesday.

Bacsh said that the 42-nod championship game in the round-robin tournament among five countries was between the RP five and Indonesia, which Filipinos overwhelmed, 75-49, despite taking it easy from time to the third quarter on.

Before that, the Filipinos, handcuffed by the Philippine Center squad, tore Cambodia in shreds, 126-92.

The Philippines is looking to win an eighth straight gold medal in the event since 1991.

"We have been reminding the players that they should always go for the kill," rage delegation head and Barbour Governor Mikee Romero said. "There will be no letup on our part until those gold medals are around our necks."

Meanwhile, the RP women's team aims to olympics in twelve this chances of bagging at least one gold in the Games when it clashes with Malaysia in the 1 p.m. special

One successful shot at victory, a thousand reasons to claim fame

DANIEL CORKLEY Surprise package

SUBIC BAY, Philippines—THE country's latest swimming sensation could have made a splash even in the Olympics.

Daniel Corkley shattered the Southeast Asian Games record in the 50-meter freestyle by clocking 22.80 seconds, a mark that also turned out to be the eighth-best clocking in the finals of the 2004 Sydney Olympics.

"I'm simply overjoyed, that's all I can say," said Corkley after capturing the gold in the only individual event for the USA-Hawaiian joined in the 29th SEA Games.

Hawaiian father

Corkley, whose father is Hawaiian and mom is Filipina, accomplished the milestone three days short of his 18th birthday on Dec. 15.

The feat also earned the 6-foot-1 Corkley a trip to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games after meeting the Class A qualifying mark of 23.13 on host the 18th rookie of team-mates Miguel Molina, Ryan Arabejo and Jasper Walch.

"When Daniel did it was awesome," said coach Finley Bonsan, a 1972 Munich Olympian veteran. "That was all pure talent."

Yildefonso great grandson

Corkley, the boss and double-speed great grandson of only Filipino double Olympic medalist Teofilo Yildefonso, seized the two-year-old record of 23.70 seconds set by Ronald Custodio not once, but twice, on the same day.

Before his gold-winning performance, Corkley registered 23.06 seconds in the morning heats.

"Even coach John Poppel left all his seat when he saw what Daniel did," Bonsan said, referring to the Aussie coin swimming coach of the Arkansas University Razorbacks, who also handles Arabejo at Bella High School.

Virtual unknown

Bonsan disclosed he even debated with swimming chief Chiah Joseph on Corkley's inclusion in the lineup since the virtual unknown was was competing in only one event.

"In the end, I pleaded because I believe in this guy," said Bonsan.

Even before his national team and SEAG debut, Corkley, a recent Kealakehe High School graduate, also owns the Hawaiian age-group freestyle records in the 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14-year-old brackets.

Hurting Toni hopes 3rd time's a charm

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

SUBIC BAY, Philippines—HERSEY Hurtada got a chance to prevent a gold shutout for the Filipinos in pencak silat by beating the reigning world champion in the under 60 kg division on Monday.

The 5-foot-4 fighter from Roxas City also the winner in the under 50 kg class in 2003, eliminated Mohd Mahmoud of Malaysia, 3-2, to reach the finals against Thailand's Supaya Arunkrat tomorrow.

"I'll try my best," said Hurtada, the last Filipino standing from an original 13-man squad.

* * *

A third straight gold in lawn bowl tournament in three months.

Still hurting after scoring an Olympic berth in a qualifying tournament in Vietnam last month, that target remains within reach for Marie Antoinette Rivera when badminton starts at the Subic Bay Freeport Convention Center.

Rivera is one of five defending champions expected to again shine for the badminton squad that rules six crowns in Manila two years ago on top of five silvers and one bronze.

The other previous winners are featherweight Edwardo Ge, flyweight John Paul Lizardo, featherweight Kirstie Elaine Alora and women's beauties Esther Marie Singson.

Or clinched an Olympic slot during the world qualifiers last September in England, where Rivera also conquered and barely missed securing a berth.

Rivera first became a SEAG champion in 2002, then made it to the 2004 Athens Olympics and last year's Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Also seeking action today are women's heavyweight Catherine Bond, women's middleweight Cordelia Boano, heavyweight Michol Alejandrino, middleweight Alex Briones and welterweight Ernesto Mendoza.

DOWN THE HILL SLIDING Eric Arcon takes aim as she eyes ball during her women's 63-ball semifinal match against Sasithorn Tankul of Thailand. Arcon's bid to defend her double-gold feat from the previous SEA Games came apart after she bowed to the Thai, in the decisive race that broke a 58-all tie. GARY LUCAS

Amit crashes out; water polo, rugby teams settle for silver

By Mueng R. Castillo

SUBIC BAY, Philippines—RUBILEN Amit failed in her bid for another golden double on Tuesday after getting knocked out in the semifinals of the women's 63-ball singles at the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Subic Bay Tennis Court.

The 28-year-old Amit, who scored a sweep of the 9- and 8-ball singles in Manila in 2005 and who on Sunday reigned in the 9-ball, was upset by home bet Sasithorn Sanitchol in a 3-all ball game, 7-6.

Sanitchol was out to dash with the no-pole-looking Indonesian, Angeline Magdalena Tiwaitu, Amit's 9-ball finals victim, for the gold late Tuesday night.

Tiwaitu, who bungled a 5-2 lead against Amit in the 9-ball finals on Sunday, took out Filipina Mary Ann Bautista, 7-2, before handling no second-seeded Dori Mary Chai of Singapore, 7-4, in the semis.

In men's action, former double-gold champion Ronnie Alcano won his second of a ball-all game and advanced to the semifinals of the men's 8-ball singles after a 9-6 nipping of Loo Han Yeh of Singapore.

The 33-year-old Alcano, who won the World 9-Ball in 2006 in Manila, will next face PBC veteran Ibrahim Bin Amir of Malaysia in the final four this Asian sound a similar 5-4 decision of Indonesian Dicky Yang.

Meanwhile, the Philippine men's water polo team drew with Thailand on Thursday, 10-10, and settled for the silver medal behind Singapore.

Trailing 6-5 with a plus-2-4 point goal difference, the Filipinos booted the Indonesians, who scored 37 goals but gave up the same number for the bronze.

It was a respectable finish for the water polo squad, whose first was duplicated by the rugby team made up mostly of Filipino-Australians.

The Philippine rugby team found the Thais too slippery in the second half of the gold-medal match after Tuesday being finished in the period to lose, 28-14 at the Tournament Camp Stadium.

Sitsophanu Khankasi scored three of the four Thai goals, with the other coming from Parsert Jaemsupan as Thailand overwhelmed the Philippines for another golden performance.

Starter Gaist Holgate and Oliver Saunders scored the two Philippine points in the first half as the Filipinos looked headed for an upset win by holding the Thais to a 14-14 tie.

The Philippines also got the goods from Saunders in a 12-7 semifinal victory over Malaysia, while Thailand advanced to the gold medal match by making short work of Indonesia, 24-7.

In badminton, the mixed doubles pair of Rosiati and Kusuarie Asnacios marshaled into the quarterfinals after bumping the Vietnamese tandem of Hoang Hai Nguyen and Thi Quynh Mai Phi, 21-11, 21-9.

The Asnacios, ranked 28th in the world, next face the second-ranked Indonesian team of Nandy Lingaile and Ni te Marina for a place in the semifinals.

Mavs whip Knicks as Dirk waxes hot

NBA'S Most guard Dwyane Wade (center) soars in the lane against the defense of Phoenix standouts Leandro Barbosa (left) and Raja Bell in their game yesterday

NEW YORK—DIRK NOWITZKI SCORED A SEASON-HIGH 46 POINTS to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 99-89 win over the New York Knicks on Monday.

Nowitzki hit 14 of 23 field-goal attempts, including three of five three-pointers, and was five of seven from the line as the Mavericks continued their domination of the Knicks.

He had 21 points in the first quarter to propel the Mavericks to a 28-19 lead.

"I was fortunate enough to find my rhythm very quickly," Nowitzki told reporters. "In the last couple of weeks, my jumper didn't really feel great. I didn't have a lot of really good looks."

Josh Howard added 22 and Jerry Stackhouse had 13.

But Dallas coach Avery Johnson was not happy with how some of the other Mavericks played as Dallas blew a large portion of a 23-point third quarter lead.

"The last three minutes in the third quarter were absolutely pathetic," Johnson told reporters. "We had some guys in there that let the team down, and we had to go back with Dirk, Jose (Juan Barea) and Devin (Harris)."

Zach Randolph scored all 24 of his points in the second half to pace New York. He also had 13 rebounds.

Jamal Crawford added 18 and Fred Jones 16 for the Knicks, who had their third consecutive loss.

The Knicks played without point guard Stephon Marbury. He continues to mourn the recent death of his father.

As usual with the Knicks, basketball was only part of the story. Madison Square Garden and Knicks coach Isiah Thomas reached an $11.3 million settlement in the sexual harassment case brought by former team executive Anucha Browne Sanders.

In Orlando, Florida, Josh Smith had 25 points and a season-high 16 rebounds and Joe Johnson scored 24 points as the Atlanta Hawks won their third straight NBA game, 98-87, over the Orlando Magic.

The Hawks led for all but the opening 99 seconds, and held Orlando's prolific threes point shooters in check almost all game. Orlando shot a season-low 38.7 percent. The Hawks capitalized on 19 Magic turnovers for 29 points.

Hedo Turkoglu led Orlando with 22 points, while Dwight Howard had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Howard was just 4-of-14 from the free throw line.

Anthony Johnson had 15 points and five assists for Atlanta, and Smith added four blocks and five assists.

In Philadelphia, Andre Iguodala scored 30 points and Andre Miller had 17 points and 12 assists for the 76ers, who led by as many as 21 points in the third quarter. Yao Ming scored a game-high 31 points for the Houston Rockets.

Willie Green scored 20 points for the Sixers.

Houston's Tracy McGrady scored 12 points before leaving the game in the second half with a sprained right ankle. Rockets rookie Luis Scola added 24 points. Luther Head had 18 and Yao Ming 12 for the Rockets.

Kyle Korver's three-pointer capped a 15-2 run that helped the Sixers take a 56-42 lead into halftime.

In Phoenix, Dwyane Wade scored 18 of his 31 points in the final four minutes and the Miami Heat ended its longest road trip of the season with a 117-113 victory over the Suns.

The Heat, in their ninth game away from home in nine days, had double-digit leads in all four quarters but beat Phoenix for the first time in Chris's season.

Udonis Haslem added 21 points, Shaquille O'Neal had 18 and Jerrell Wright 14 as the Heat put six players in double figures and shot 59 percent to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

The Suns made five three-pointers, three by Grant Hill and two by Steve Nash, in the final 1:10 but could get no closer than 113-108.

Hill, Raja Bell, Shawn Marion and Amar'e Stoudemire all scored 19 points for Phoenix. AP Reuters

THOMAS Cast-aside

Against Patriots, it's wise to keep mouth shut

FOXBOROUGH—LONG AFTER A Foxboro Hall of Fame quarterback torebound himself into a quarterback controversy, with touchdown bombs overhis head and verbal bombs inches from his face, young Pittsburgh rookie Anthony Smith stood at his stall in the back of the moved Steelers locker room yesterday and was offered a chance to eat his words.

Smith is the second-year player who boldly—and foolishly—guaranteed the Steelers would win yesterday's game against New England, which streaked in a 13-0 start and is vying a perfect NFL season.

"Anthony," a journalist asked him, just minutes after New England shredded his team, 34-13, by scorching the secondary for 399 passing yards and four touchdowns, "If you could do it over, would you guarantee the win again?"

"Yes," he answered. "I went out every game to win. In this league, if you walk into an arena planning to lose, you're not a guy anyone will want to play with."

In theory, he is correct. But Smith can only heaped further pressure on himself with his misplaced arrogance, he also joined a weary Patriots team that had played three consecutive night games and was, quite frankly, looking a bit vulnerable in the wake of eight wins over Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Yet nobody can match New England's ability to take the slightest perceived disrespect and transform it into a major—and personal—injustice. The Patriots relied on this tactic in Super Bowl XXXIX when lackluster receiver Freddie Mitchell belittled their secondary. They worked themselves into a lather during last season's playoffs when San Diego star Shawne Merriman predicted the Chargers would face the Jets, because they would beat the Patriots.

The latest victim of their motivational frenzy is Seattle, the former Syracuse star whose aggressive defensive style was expected to rile up the Patriots.

"We know he plays that way, so we put some stuff in (the advantage of that," said receiver Jabar Gaffney.

"I came in here and I said everything (like Hobbs, 'It hasn't been learned.'

"I've said some things I've regretted," Hobbs added, "but nothing where I've gotten the whole East Coast ready for war, saying, 'Come on over here so we can slap you around.'"

There's no doubt the Patriots targeted Smith Sunday. He was covering Randy Moss when Brady found him in the back of the end zone for the first touchdown of the day. As the quarterback scrambled, under the pressure, he turned and delivered some choice words to the safety.

"I don't care to repeat them, especially if my mother reads it," Brady said. "But wouldn't be very happy with what I said."

Brady exploited Smith again on the very next offensive series, he faked the hand-off to Laurence Maroney and watched with glee as the safety came up to help stop the run, then got burned on Brady's 40-yard bomb to Moss. Asked if he intentionally called a play to exploit Smith, Brady answered, "Yes, he just ended up being in the right place in the right time."

And then he burst out laughing.

It's interesting to revisit the comments from New England earlier in the week, when most of the Patriots professed indifference over Seattle's rookie. Now we know better. He ticked this team off, and it was hell bent on making him pay. AFP News Service

NEW ENGLAND quarterback Tom Brady and the rest of the Patriots know how to juice themselves up at the slightest sign of disrespect.

SPORTSWATCH

Batawang-Solis finally set

FILIPINO FLYWEIGHT BERNABE BATAWANG-SOLIS' 108" junior flyweight champion Efren Solis' title-unification bout with Thailand's Pipat Ruthaphol will happen on Dec. 15 at the Auditorio Benito Juarez de Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico.

Batawang-Solis' manager Jaime Zamora announced the new date after Solis' left eye Los Angeles that other day, and is slated to fly to Guadalajara, Mexico today. While in LA, Batawang will work out at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym.

"I am going to Mexico to invade him (Solis)," Batawang said in a press conference.

Ashren Lagumbay, Contributor

SJC 'Rambulan' continues

FIGHTFANS INCLUDING THE REGULAR today at 5am (non-Dalmation via the second round of eliminations in the National-wide Rambulan 6-code derby, featuring more than 1?2 fights.

This five-day cockfight spectacle (Dec. 10, 12, 14, 17 and 18) has a guaranteed prize of P1-million and an entry fee of P?,000.

Meanwhile, the 1256 hatred three Asian cockfolds on Friday, Dec. 21. The Asian Grade A 6-code derby, meanwhile, frees off on Dec. 27.

'Salpukan' round 2 up

FOLLOWING TWO OF HARROWING DAYS OF 6-cock derby gets going today at the Makati Coliseum with more than 70 contenders lined up.

Those seven eliminations rounds will be staged on Dec. 13, 15, 19 and 22, according to hosts Lito Delfina, Pinky Tabal and William Co.

The winners will get more than P4 million in total prizes. For details, call 8882641, 8884471 and 8888808.

F1: Ex-champion Alonso back with Renault

MADRID, SPAIN—AFTER AN EIGHT-fold season dumbed by infighting and controversy, Fernando Alonso capped 2007 on a positive note.

The two-time Formula One world champion agreed to a two-year contract with Renault that puts him back behind the wheel of the French team where he achieved his greatest success.

"I am delighted to be returning to Renault," Alonso said in a statement on Monday. "This is the team where I grew up as a driver in Formula One."

Alonso is moving on after a turbulent season at McLaren, where the 26-year-old Spaniard was released from his three-year contract last month after publicly falling out with team boss Ron Dennis.

The reality television—crazed by Dennis' refusal to give Alonso his No. 1 status over rookie driving partner Lewis Hamilton—eventually led to a spy scandal that cost McLaren $100-million and all of its constructors' championships points.

Alonso will partner another rookie in Nelson Piquet Jr. at Renault. AP

FILIPINO Jaegin Ladon connects against Panamito Punto of Malaysia during their 48kg semifinal boxing match. Although Ladon lost on points, boxing is seen as one of the brightest Philippine Olympic medal hopes.

For SEAG athletes, it's Beijing or bust

BANGKOK (nation)—Southeast Asian athletes are honing their traditional agility and speed with feet, fists and arms in hopes of snatching medals in at least four sports in next year's Beijing Olympics.

World-class performances at the current Southeast Asian Games, the regional meeting for the Olympic equals evening, are expected in badminton, taekwondo, boxing and weightlifting.

Champions like Thailand's Khunsa Suwannarong, a boxing gold medalist at Athens, and Indonesia's Taufik Hidayat, the badminton singles winner at those games, are preparing to defend their crowns in Beijing.

Of the 135 medal-winning countries, Indonesia ranks 32nd in the all-time summer Olympic medals race with five golds. Thailand stands 57th, Philippines at 76, Malaysia at 95, with Singapore and Vietnam both at 121.

The Philippines, which has managed an Olympic medal in 1996, fields a strong taekwondo squad and stands as host in lawn bowling.

Sunthorn Hongladarom, former head of the Sports Authority of Thailand, maintains Southeast Asians could fare better if they used their biennial event to greater advantage and didn't allow already limited budgets by supporting non-Olympic sports.

There are 26 official Olympic sports. The current Southeast Asian Games is staging 43, including pencak silat, karate, bowling, ballroom dancing and snooker.

"They are just running around chasing medals at these Games—quantity not quality—rather than really focusing on preparing for the Olympics," he said. "We don't have a long range vision." AP

SPORTS

RP karatedo bets snare 3 gold medals

MEMBERS OF THE Association for the Advance of Karatedo (AAK) Team Philippines recently harvested medals, including three golds, in separate competitions in Hong Kong last month.

Norman Montalvo won the gold over a Taiwanese fighter in the Junior -60kg event of the 11th Asia Pacific Shinkyo Kumite Championships held at the Shek Kip Mei Park Sports Center (scores 24-22).

Montalvo likewise took a bronze in men's kata after losing to the semifinals to world champion Takashi Kotoda of Japan.

In the 4th Asia Pacific Goju-kai Karatedo Championships at the Harbour Road Sports Center last Nov. 14-18, Ariann Mikaela Velasquez topped the 13-17 kata event while Ronaldson Akebos Flores aided the 8 and under kata.

Other top finishers in the Shinkyo Championships were bronze medalists Gerardo Rodrigo Serrano (-60kg kumite) and Oliver Neil Medina (men's open weight).

Flores settled for the silver medal in the 7-8 years kumite event, along with Rebecca Cyril Tacoro (12-14 kumite) and Gerardo Rodrigo Serrano (-60kg men's kumite).

The other bronze medalists were Jordon Craig Guevara (8- and under kata), Diedrit Bona (12-14 kata), Regina Gabrielle Tantoy (9-11 kata), Rebecca Botor (12-14 kata), Ian Laurence Silangit (7-8 kumite exist), Joseph Lanie Jacinto Miranda (13-17 kumite), Carlo Martin Abuille (13-17 kumite), Montalvo (-60kg men's kumite), Mallalac (-70kg men's kumite) and Ann Siva (ex-bio Tan (-50kg women's kumite).

The AAK is the lone local association recognized and affiliated with the World Shinkyo Karatedo Federation and the International Karatedo-Goshiei Association.

A TRIUMPHANT raise for the Philippine team on the 4th Asian Pacific Goju-Kai karate-do championships

So banners chess team to Asia tilt

By Ray Lauron

IO YUENG YET IO GODE, Wesley So will again be tested when he spearheads a Philippine squad loaned for the Asian Chess Team Championships in Visakhapatnam, South India, ready next year.

Now the world's youngest Grandmaster at 14, So may yet be given the top board assignment over fellow GMs Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr., Eugene Torre and Mark Paragua and International master John Catalino Sadorra when the Filipinos compete against the world-ranked Indians and Chinese and rivalries from the former Soviet Republics in the tournament on Jan. 2-11.

So, who became a full-fledged GM during the event third Marques Pichay Jr Cup, is expected to overtake Antonio as the country's top player when the Fide (World Chess Federation) releases its players' rating in January.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Pichay is pleased with So's rapid rise and seems to give him maximum exposure.

Pichay said he will also nominate So to be the Philippine Sportswriters Association's "Athlete of the Year" for 2007.

"He's accomplishments in the international chess scene is unprecedented," said Pichay. "Right now he is the world's youngest GM at age 14 years, one month and 28 days and the world's seventh youngest to achieve the feat."

So, the world's youngest player to his age group, Antonio, Torre and Paragua were all members of the 80' men's team that landed 44th in the 2006 Turin Chess Olympiad. Paragua manned the top board then with Torre and Antonio playing board 2 and 3 and So serving as an alternate.

Competing the women's team are Shoreto Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza, Jihelly Cua and Catherine Arreza, the same player that gave the country 36th place in the Turin Olympiad.

WESLEY So

La Salle-Zobel cops WBL title

DE LA SALLE ZOBEL REpulsed Miriam College to eke out a 59-55 victory and bag the high school (competitive) title in the Mike-sponsored 2007 BBET Center Women's Basketball League Sunday at the Xavier School gym.

La Salle led by double digits after three quarters, but Miriam rallied to tie the count at 54-54. It, however, regained its bearing and earned pivotal points to surge ahead for good, 58-54.

Princess Trinidad, who was later adjudged most valuable player, led (8-32 with 15 points, while Therese Rosada posted 11 for the losers.

Assumption Antipolo also cheated its Thomas's College to pull through, 61-52, and bag the high school (developmental) crown.

6'0" Mayric Claire Aseron and Kris Cruz sparkled for the champion Antipolo.

Miriam made up for its set-back to DLSZ by winning the elementary plum over the La Salle, 39-32, while College of St. Benilde prevailed on much for St. Scholastica's College, 45-44, in the college finals.

CSB's Joyce Mae Sernal was named the college level's MVP.

The sportsmanship awards went to USB college; DLSZ, high school (competitive), Miriam, high school (developmental) and DLSZ, elementary.

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Shares close flat ahead of US Fed's rate-setting /B4
■ Buying prices of tobacco increased /B8

BUSINESS

Editor Raoul B. Maravilla • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Montano

Excellence in Connection
Enjoy the Best First Class Service in the World

Exports jumped 10.5% in October

10-month total at $41.85B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS GREW AT A FASTER PACE of 10.5 percent to $4.65 billion in October from a year ago as companies around the globe started building up their inventories in anticipation of higher demand during the holidays.

In September, exports grew by only 4.6 percent year-on-year.

The accelerated rise in exports in October was accounted for largely by the electronics sector, which posted a growth of 9.4 percent to $2.87 billion. Electronics are the country's major export products, accounting for 63.8 percent of the total earnings for the month.

"The last quarter of the year normally records the highest growth for the electronics sector because of the coming 'holidays,'" according to Ernesto Santiago, president of the Semiconductors and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc.

The latest figure brought total exports for the first 10 months of the year to $41.85 billion, up by 5.44 percent from the same period last year.

However, the 10-month cumula-

EXPORTS B6

Peso now at 41.40 to a dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO FEATHERS EXTENDED its gains to a new seven-and-a-half year high of 41.40 alongside a region-al currency market pushed up by the rise of the Chinese yuan as well as a fi-

PESO B6

FOR TOTAL TERMITE PROTECTION, USE
Solignum for wood protection,
HomeTrek TC for soil treatment.

Citi forecasts 6.8-7.6% growth for RP in next 2 years

Sees investment recovery and buoyant domestic demand

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL BANKING GIANT CITIgroup Inc. sees the Philippine economy growing by 6.8 percent next year and 7.6 percent in 2009 on the back of an investment recovery and buoyant domestic demand.

"We expect an upbeat private investment cycle over the next two years to be supported by sustained public investment and favorable financial market setting," Citi said in its Asia Pacific outlook for 2008.

The US-based financial conglomerate also said that while the US property downturn and rising oil prices were causing financial strain in the region, the global economy had other sources of resilience. Global structural adjustments following the US mortgage fallout were also seen happening by next year, thus paving the way for an export recovery in the Philippines by 2009.

"The US economy enjoys strong productivity growth, the absence of significant industry imbalances outside the housing sector, and strong balance sheets for both corporates and households. Strong financial positions should limit vulnerability of (employment) and business spending to tightening credit conditions," Citi said.

Another source of strength seen for the global economy is the process of sustained high growth that has been established in emerging economies like China and India.

In the Philippines, Citi said domestic demand should likewise remain buoyant over the 2008-09 forecast horizon with an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of at least 7 percent — especially with rising infrastructure spending and further policy interest rate easing by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

For this year, Citi expects the country's GDP growth at 7.1 percent following the robust performance in the first nine months.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said privatization resulted in a strong cash position for the government.

The sizable appetite for the bonds was attributed partly to the anticipated move of the US Federal Reserve to cut its key policy rate in its meeting yesterday. The market expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to also implement a rate cut to prevent a widening of the interest rate differential.

The BSP's overnight borrowing rate currently stands at 5.5 percent while the US Fed rate is at 4.5 percent. Such central bank are seen to cut their rates by a quarter percentage point.

Some analysts said the BSP would not allow a widening of the interest rate differential to prevent the peso from appreciating further. If bond interest rates are significantly higher than that of the US Fed rate, this would encourage more dollar investments into the Philippines, thus resulting in higher demand for and subsequent appreciation of the peso.

A cut in the BSP's key policy rates influences interest rates on government securities to drop as well. Banks are therefore encouraged to buy more treasury bonds prior to a rate cut by the BSP.

"Banks are already positioning given the expected decision of the Fed to cut its rate and the BSP's reaction to it," Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said in a briefing after the auction.

It was earlier reported that the government's borrowings as of the first 10 months of the year stood at P419.47 billion, already exceeding the full-year program of P380.95 billion. Officials earlier said the excess borrowings were partly due to the government's issuance of retail treasury bonds (RTBs) in July.

The government had originally intended to sell only P6 billion in RTBs, but the market showed huge demand for the securities. Finance officials said this encouraged the government to sell more than P50 billion in RTBs.

Tan said the government may reduce the borrowing program for 2008 because of the excess borrowings this year.

4-yr bond rate falls to 5.875%

By Michelle V. Basco

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) investors' strong appetite for risk-free securities pulled down the rate of the 4-year treasury bonds by more than a percentage point to 5.875 percent yesterday, the last government securities auction of the year.

The rate on the four-year bonds last stood at 6.96 percent in the July 16 auction.

The Bureau of the Treasury said the drop in the 4-year bond rate was due to high demand for the debt paper, as shown by the P18.84 billion worth of bids that exceeded the government's debt offering of only P7 billion.

The government accepted P7 billion worth of bids as it did not see any need to borrow more than the indicated amount.

Lani Cayetano, the government general (PSALM) Corp. This was on top of the estimated P43 billion raised earlier this year from the sale of other state-owned units.

PNOC unit expects P410.7-M profit

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT Corp. (PDMC), the real estate arm of the state-owned Philippine National Oil Co., expects its 2007 profit to hit P410.7 million, a big jump from last year's P1 a.1-million.

PDMC president and chief executive Wilfredo Ilaseresa said the improved profit range could be attributed to the company's aggressive collection efforts, drastic cost-cutting and the disposition of assets.

"[The year] 2007 is definitely the best year since the company started operations as it is set to achieve record high growths in all aspects of its operations, from importantly record-breaking profits and soaring cash reserves," he said in a statement yesterday.

"This year, the company projects to break records in terms of higher profit at P4.10.7 million, highest profit growth of 2,761.9 percent, highest operating income at P111 million, which is 507 percent higher than 2006 level," he added.

With the company's strong performance this year, he said PDMC's cash reserves for 2007 should hit P402.6 million—the highest ever in the company's history.

He said that for the past years, PDMC had suffered losses. In 2000, the company posted a net loss of P18.26 million, followed by P5.15 million in 2002 and P21.42 million in 2005.

The owners of losses only stopped last year when PDMC registered a net income of P14.1 million, growing 76.67 percent from 2005, he said.

PDMC's parents firm PNOC recently plans to eventually dissolve the subsidiary due the result disposition of its assets.

Instead of privatization via straight auction, PDMC will most likely just be dissolved when all its assets have been sold.

PDMC is engaged in industrial estate development and management, managing the 121-hectare Filoil property in Rosario, Cavite.

The PNOC subsidiary was also socialized housing, subdivision and commercial area, including a joint

BPI sees 12% growth in remittance

Says higher incomes compensating for slowdown in deployment

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE Manila, the country's biggest banking channel for overseas Filipino remittances, sees its money transfer business growing by 10 to 12 percent next year despite the slowdown in the deployment of new workers.

Teresita Tan, BPI senior vice president for overseas banking, yesterday told reporters that for this year, the bank's remittance volume would likely grow by 15 percent in line with industry performance.

She added that average remittances per transaction were increasing as overseas Filipino workers had to compensate for the shrinking remittance may of the 4% dollar given fixed household expenditure in peso terms. From an average remittance of $200 to $300 per transaction (usually on a monthly basis), the range has gone up to $350 to $500, she said.

"Remittances of Filipinos are increasing by $50 to $100 per transaction because they have to send in more the equivalent's absolute value in pesos. While the peso is appreciating, salaries for expenses anywhere remain the same."

Tan estimated that BPI—cited by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas as an outstanding banking channel for remittances for the last two consecutive years—captured a 23-percent market share in this lucrative business. The bank also commands 60 percent of this remittance business from the state-owned industry.

Remittances flowing to the Philippines through banks amount to at least $2 billion a month.

Tan said higher incomes were compensating for the slowdown in the deployment of new workers abroad.

"The OFWs are highly skilled and there wages are higher," Tan said. "Industry concerned where deployment was going down but, we're sending more skilled people like computer professionals, doctors and nurses. And a lot of them are investing."

"There's a slowdown in deployment but, there is growth in the absolute value of remittances because of the quality of deployment," she said.

To further expand its remittance reach, four new BPI Express Remittance Centers were established, bringing to 28 the total remittance offices across the globe. In Italy, an office in Milan was opened to cater primarily to the Chinese market while a Chinese desk was set up in Bologna, countering the bank's claims to penetrate business from the non-Filipino market as well.

Now the app owns Ukraine (forged), including arrangements with top regional banks like Ukrsot Bank of South Ukraine and Delta Bank for host of transfers.

BPI also reported that significant revenue was brought in by Metro Pacific's new insurance service subsidiary, Express Bond, which was renamed pri-

PSBank
U$ Dollar
TIME DEPOSIT

	$1,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 and up
1 month	3.58%	3.63%	3.63%	3.75%
2 months	3.50%	3.63%	3.75%	3.88%
3 months	3.63%	3.75%	3.75%	3.88%
6 months	3.75%	3.88%	3.88%	4.00%
12months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

Manage your account online via PSBank Remote Banking. Open a time deposit now in any of 163 branches nationwide.

Shares close flat ahead of US Fed's rate-setting

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.1 PERCENT lower yesterday as cautious investors refrained from taking positions ahead of the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates, dealers said.

The main index lost as much as 26 points in early trading before bargain-hunters stepped in, chasing market leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and Ayala Corp.

The composite index finished down 2.34 points at 3,873.58. It moved between 3,849.28 and 3,883.97.

The broader all-share index was up 0.9 of a point to 2,243.75.

There were 97 advancers and 84 decliners with 59 trading flat.

A total of 1.6 billion shares worth P3.6 billion were traded.

Mid-Asian area updates on Monday as expectations for a rate cut and an uptick in pending home sales helped offset concerns about another round of subprime mortgage-related losses.

The Fed was to meet later yesterday to decide what to do with interest rates, with financial markets having priced in a 25 basis point rate cut.

Markets were previously betting for an aggressive half-point cut in interest rates until recent positive US economic data came out.

"It may cut in a quiet ... but we may see a second reaction if it's just 25 basis points," said Lawrence de Leon at Accord Capital Equities.

Foreign funds were also seen eyeing their positions in local stocks ahead of the widely expected rate cut in the United States, said Ben Ng Sing Hin at DBP Nomura Securities.

"Foreign investors are cashing out of emerging markets and looking for refuge funds to the US," he said.

News that Philippine export rose 36.5 percent in October from a year earlier, the first double-digit growth rate in nine months, failed to inspire investors, dealers said. (See story on Page B4.)

PLDT, the nation's biggest company by market value, rose P35 to P3,050. Ayala Corp., the country's biggest conglomerate, was up P10 at P585. AFP

Start Your New Year Right With
Accounting Solutions For All Business Types
QuickBooks® 2008

PLAN YOUR SUCCESS!

PRODUCTS PROVEN TO INCREASE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Pepsi-Cola to pursue IPO

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PEPSI-COLA PRODUCTS PHILIPPINES Inc. is set to go public early next year to raise roughly P7.9 billion and finance expansion plans.

The Philippine Stock Exchange said yesterday in a memo to brokers that the listed Pepsi handles would list 1.21 billion shares at P6.64 a share.

Pepsi would sell up to 390.76 million new shares and 764.36 million shares held by existing shareholders, namely, Grupo Ayala Philippines Inc. and The Stanley Fund.

The Singapore-based Stanley Fund could issue an additional 171.16 million shares, depending on market demand.

An international book-building process will run from Jan. 8 to 16, with the domestic offer period set on Jan. 15 to 28.

The listing has been tentatively set for February 13 next year.

UBS Investment Bank will be the lead underwriter for the international offer while ATR Kim Eng and BDO Capital are the joint domestic underwriters.

The company will use the net proceeds from the combined offer to partly finance planned capital expenses for 2008 and 2009.

Pepsi has set a budget of P2.375 billion for additional manufacturing, production facilities, the expansion of some carbonated beverage plants, and the launch of new products.

Pepsi is the licensed bottler of PepsiCo beverages in the Philippines.

Its products include juices, iced teas, sports drinks and energy drinks.

Its soft drinks and beverage brands include Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Light, Pepsi Max, 7Up, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Lipton Iced Tea, Tropicana, Propel and SOBE.

In 2006, it sold 110 million eight ounce equivalents of carbonated beverages and 16 million eight ounce equivalent cases of noncarbonated beverages.

It also manufactures and packages products at 11 production plants nationwide and distributes them through 306 sales offices and warehouses.

As of June 30, Pepsi-Cola Philippines' net income was P1 billion, up from P868.74 million in the same period in 2006.

Semiconductor firm sets up training unit

By Vivien Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—TEXAS INSTRUMENTS Philippines Inc. (TIpi) is developing an Asian Center of Excellence in the country as it prepares to expand its presence in the region.

Officials of the top semiconductor firm announced its plans at the University of the Cordilleras last Dec. 7, when the firm linked up with the school and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to fast track an P80-million "information technology (IT) bridge program."

UC is one of eight Philippine universities tasked by a national technical working group to implement President Macapagal-Arroyo's cyber-corridor concept.

Mr Jerome has identified this information technology hub (Dat Bike Baguio in other circles as a "super region."

The University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and the UP Open University; Asia Pacific Regional College; Nova Computer College; Polytechnic University of the Philippines; Cebu Institute of Technology and Mindanao State University's Iligan Institute of Technology are undertaking their own IT bridge programs until the end of the month.

Ronald Dimaano, worldwide manager for the Dallas-based TI Center of Excellence, formalized TIpi's commitments to the "super region" in a program last week.

The program's main goal is to prepare graduate degree training modules that would help schools match the skills of new graduates "with the requirements of the industry through training," according to the program manual.

TIpi's main plant in the Baguio City Economic Zone has been developing apprenticeship programs with various Baguio schools.

Kepco starts construction of 200-MW plant

By Abigail L. Ho

KEPCO-EPC POWER CORP., A PARTNERship between Kepco Philippines Corp. and EPC Power Corp., has awarded a $168-million contract to Doosan Heavy Industries and Construction Company Ltd. for the establishment of a 200-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant in Naga, Cebu.

Under the engineering and construction contract, the two 100-MW units of the new plant should be completed in 30-42 months.

In a statement, the joint venture company said the facility would use circulating fluidized bed combustion technology, a clean coal technology that complies with stringent environmental laws, including the Philippine Clean Air Act and World Bank standards.

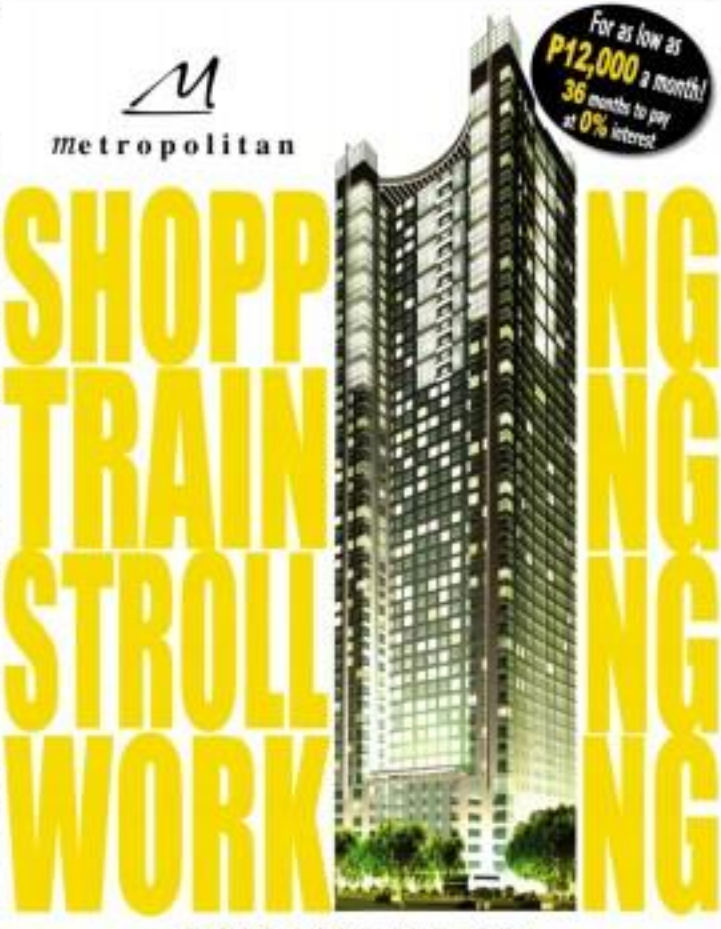
"KEPC took the risk of establishing the first power generation plant under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 without any government guarantee, not only to strengthen our Philippine investment portfolio, but also to address the projected power shortage in the Visayas grid and bring employment and business opportunities for Cebu," KEPC president Lee Kang Won said.

When completed, KEPC's Naga, Cebu plant would serve the power requirements of six electric cooperatives in the area.

The six cooperatives all signed power sales contracts with KEPC for 120 MW of power.

Korea Electric Power Corp.'s Philippine operations currently include Kephilco, which operates the 650-MW Malaya Thermal Power Plant in Rizal, and Kepco Ilijan Corp., which operates the 1,200-MW Ilijan Combined Cycle Power Plant in Batangas.

The Korean power giant accounts for around 1% percent of the country's installed generation capacity.



Rebellion

PAY SAUCE IS MEDIEVAL times, Cardinal Richelieu, Chief Minister of France (that was before the separation of Church and State), established the principle that any rebellion against the Crown should be punished mercilessly no matter how high the culprit's rank, and, even at the cost of severe individual rights.

Rebellion dealt decisively with the Huguenot rebels. He exiled the Queen Mother herself and the assistance King's brother for plotting against the Throne.

In short, when a rebellion threatens the security of the State, government should act swiftly (ruthlessly if necessary), and with all the might at its command. Any rebellion must be punished at all costs. The security of the State was primordial.

Also, in our day of instant communications, you do not wait for a rebellion to gather steam, or for the rebels to build defender section Ayala, or for years of blood to flow down the ravine, before you act. You must nip the rebellion in the bud.

So, when Senator Trillanes and Gen. Danny Lim incubated the rebellion from the relative safety of a function suite in the Peninsula hotel in Makati, it was not necessary for the government to seek a ruling from the Supreme Court, or ask the Department of Justice for an opinion, or wait for the issuance of the Integrated Bar before deciding to move in on the rebels.

It was absolutely correct for the government to quickly deploy, instead, enough of its best troops (the battle-hardened Marines, no less), with their assault vehicles and armored carriers, and accommodate on the ground by some of our highest-ranking general officers, to put down the rebellion before the day was done.

So what if shock and awe tactics were used? So what if it was overkill? It worked, didn't it? This time, the end justified the means. This was all that really mattered.

In the ensuing interplay after the surrender of Trillanes and the rebel officers, what was all the fried culprit?—Oh, yes, Senator JV Ejercito, a number of media people were handcuffed and brought to camp for processing.

Afterward, the uproar from media resulted in the dialog at the Pen between government forces headed by Secretary Perez erupted against such media outbursts as Mario Ilanes and Jessica Soho.

Starting a bad trail, I murdered the entire comedy show in my bedroom.

Mario and Jessica, as well as the rest of the media in attendance, insisted that the arrest of reporters was an attack on press freedom.

Besides, the reporters were just doing their job of providing information the Filipino people had the constitutional right to know. Even the infamous Ilanes TV sarmentia fired the Filipino people a sensitive manipulative, if not downright sleazy, live.

Your TV screen will show a demonstration of as few as a dozen screaming people with placards. The small TV screen gives the impression of a large demonstration. But, what really happened was that the demonstrators formally bused at P500 a head) sat only posing for the TV cameras. After the footage is taken, everybody goes home.

Media said that the arrest of the reporters had a chilling effect on similar incidents in the future. In fact, if there was a twilight at the Pen, the reporters would have been caught in the crossfire.—andrew@

Mario and Jessica and every body else there were really concerned over the outrage of their programs. The higher the ratings, the higher the advertising rates. The higher the advertising rates, the higher the net profit.

I have nothing against profit. In our free enterprise system, everybody (including journalist brothers like myself) works for a positive bottom line.

But, I cannot stand self-righteousness. And, on top of everything else, in spelling a rebellion, nobody, not even media people, has any rights.

QUESTIONS OF POLICES

Honorato C. Gonzaga

APC unit prepares to start geothermal venture in Kalinga

COMPUTER LITERACY PROGRAM
US Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney explains the contents of a website to high school students of Sanitarium City College in Zamboanga City as they access the World Wide Web through the computers their school received from USAID's Computer Literacy and American Corner Initiative Program, a component of USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program. CLIC has so far provided computers and Internet access to 693 schools in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

Deal covers 59% of planned service area

By Abigail L. Ho

ARAGORN POWER AND ENERGY CORP. (Apec), a subsidiary of listed Iris APC Group Inc., has gotten the consent of a group of indigenous people in Kalinga for the use of portion of their ancestral land for the firm's geothermal power production project.

In addendum to the Philippine Stock Exchange, APC Group corporate secretary Edmundo Tan said Apec and partner Unified Management Corp. had signed a memorandum of agreement with the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous people (ICC/IP) of Kalinga.

The signing of the agreement, which was facilitated by the National Commission on Indigenous People, formed part of the process for securing the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of the affected ICC/IP in the area, he explained.

The agreement is one of the requirements for the Department of Energy's award of a geothermal service contract to Apec. It contains the terms and conditions for the development of the geothermal project, as well as the benefits for the affected ICC/IP and the obligations and responsibilities of the parties involved.

The ICC/IP that signed the agreement included the Balatoc, Colayo, Galdang, Banggolo and Dalupa Ablog. The deal covers a total area of 11,524 hectares or 59 percent of the geothermal service area, Tan said.

"Negotiations for the remaining five ancestral domains who have signified their support for the project are ongoing," he said. "With the granting of the FPIC by the ICC/IP, the DOE will issue a certificate precondition required by the SOE for the granting of a geothermal service contract to Apec."

In an earlier interview, APC Group chairman and president Willy Ocier said this was the only remaining requirement that the company needed to comply with to pave the way for APC's 172.8-megawatt (MW) geothermal project in Tanglag.

Apec had filed applications with the DOE for two geothermal sites in the Cordilleran Region in Benguet (27,500 ha) and Ifugao Province in Kalinga (126,250 ha).

The power generation potential of these two sites have been placed at 20 megawatts (MW) and 110 MW to 300 MW, respectively.

Philcomsat faction elevates case to Court of Appeals

By Dawn L. Lucas

THE LOCSIN-PONCIANO FACTION OF the Philcomsat group of companies yesterday moved a Makati City regional trial court judge and the rival Africa-Bilmoy group for allegedly ignoring a decision of a higher court in their long-running dispute.

In a manifestation filed yesterday, the Locsin-Ponciano group asked the Court of Appeals to "place on record the discourses for the writ of preliminary injunction being perpetrated by the RTC Makati City and parties."

The Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) and the Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) are both sequestered firms, having been confiscated from alleged Marcos associates in the late 1980s. After a compromise agreement, both are now controlled by private shareholders, while 61 listed subsidiary, Philcomsat Holdings Corp., remains under the control of government-appointed directors.

"The records of this case reveal that Erlinda I. Bildner, purportedly in representation of PHC and Philcomsat, had questioned the issuance of the writ and had prayed that the same be killed," the Locsin-Ponciano group said in their complaint before the appellate court.

"In contrast with this, she had even filed a petition for certiorari before the Supreme Court, raising the same issue and reiterating her challenge to the writ, despite the pendency of her motion to file before this honorable court."

"The Judges of Manila-shopping are clear, more so with her recent filing of the complaint before the RTC of Makati City," it added.

The move is the latest in a long series

PHILCOMSAT/B6

RLC starts mixed-use venture in E. Visayas

ROBINSONS LAND CORP. RECENTLY UNveiled its latest provincial mall project in Tacloban City, Robinsons Tacloban, which is expected to break ground by the first quarter of 2018 and to open by the end of 2019.

The two-level shopping mall will rise on a 4-hectare property in Tacloban City, Leyte, the largest province in Eastern Visayas.

"We will build a full-service shopping mall with a gross floor area of 30,000 square meters. Robinsons Department Store, Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Appliances, and Robinsons Cinemas are among the anchor tenants. On it that plus three cinemas will be opening side by side with other establishments like food, fashion and service outlets. We are also welcoming both national and local retailers to join us in our commercial centers undertaking," says Cornelio S. Mapa Jr., general manager of Robinsons Malls.

Groundbreaking activities are also expected to rise within the complex grounds, including a site for a three-story call center building, with a 750-seat capacity.

AN ARTIST'S perspective of the Tacloban mall project

BPI sees 12% ...

From page B1

nearly through BPI.

EA-based Ecosm, one of the world's leading Internet-based remittance service providers, and Al Rajhi Bank of Saudi Arabia also recently signed a cash transfer partnership deal early BPI.

"We're (also) expanding in Europe ...Spain and Italy. We're upgrading our branch in Barcelona and we're setting up an office in Turin," Tan said.

In the United States, Tan said BPI would acquire a new remittance center in Sacramento, California, after opening a second branch in Las Vegas.

"Most of centers, we have are London office," she said.

He added that BPI was also negotiating remittance tie-ups with partners in Australia and Canada.

PNOC unit ...

From page B1

venture with Iba, Zambales.

Two years ago, PNOC said it expected to raise at least P1.3 billion from the sale of its 10-percent stake in PDMC, representing the sale of 31 million shares to a foreign buyer by the end of 2017.

After listing go of its 51-percent share, holdings in PDMC, PNOC would then offer 18 percent of its real estate arm to the public through such channels as an initial public offering or a sale to small investors.

PNOC would then end up owning just 33 percent of PDMC.

The planned sale, however, was eventually dropped, with PNOC choosing to just do a straight asset sale.

Exports jumped 10.5% . . .

From page B1

the growth in exports was still just about half of the government's official target of 11 percent for 2017. Dr. porters said the double-digit target was no longer attainable (DOF-08 official, target) but hasn't been met for the year.

These included the slowing US economy, the Philippines' biggest export market, and the appreciation of the peso.

Other top exports for October were articles of apparel and clothing accessories (accounting for $107.61 million of total export bill for the month, down 16.6 percent year-on-year); cathodes and sections of cathodes of refined copper ($52.47 million, up 17 percent); coconut oil ($107.92 million, up 128.4 percent), petroleum ($98.08 million, up 45.1 percent); semiconductors and barrier ($91.46 million, up 4.7 percent), mining and fix motor vehicles ($82.99 million, up 15.5 percent), metal ores, potassium ($82.77 million, up 3.3 percent) and bananas ($29.6 million, down 6.9 percent).

The $50 and the United States remained the Philippines' biggest export market, purchasing $1/3 percent of the export earnings for October. Japan ($1.2 billion), China ($876.66 million), Netherlands ($155.91 million), Singapore ($267.28 million), Malaysia ($238.16 million), Germany ($183.46 million), South Korea ($169.61 million) and Taiwan ($122.47 million).

Peso now at 41.40 to a dollar

From page B1

pectations of another interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

Aside from the strong regional market, the peso also gained bullish sentiment on remittance flows from overseas Filipinos.

Other currencies in the region were also boosted by investors gaining more funds in emerging markets ahead of an expected interest rate cut by the US central bank Tuesday night.

The standard was trading in a 21-basis point interest rate cut by the US Fed," Banco de Oro (BPI) Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said.

The peso opened at 41.52 and hit a low of 41.51 but gained all the way to finish at the day's peak of 41.40 against the greenback. It was the latest currency's strongest level since ending at 41.37 to $1 on May 10, 2008.

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System was also heavier at $500 million yesterday from Monday's $346 million.

The peso, Asia's best performing currency so far this year, has gained 6.4 percent to date, data showed.

"The Philippine peso has continued to perform well. This yearly outperformance our own expectations by the second peso-dollar rate, and we perceive continuing bullish on the peso," Best Sessions & Co. said in a research note.

Sentiment flow to the country essentially peak in the fourth quarter ahead of the Christmas season, the largest and most extravagant season in the predominantly Christian country.

Meanwhile, the Chinese yuan rallied to 7.377 against the dollar, its highest since the revaluation in July 2005, after November inflation in Asia's fastest-growing economy rose at the fastest pace in 11 years.

Citi forecasts 6.8-7.6% growth for RP in next 2 years

From page B1

and rebound from the single-digit growth seen since 2000.

"Corporate investment pledges in 2017, such as Texas Instrument's pledge to add $1 billion for new assembly and capacity, look well be to extend private investment," Ooi said.

"We also expect residential private demand to remain favorable as more affordable mortgage financing rates offered by banks."

The bank said low domestic interest rates should also augur well for residential mortgage financing.

But the investment cycle is seen peaking as the political cycle starts up with presidential elections in May 2019.

"We expect long-term investors to await the new government's economic blueprint once the medium term plan is finalized in additional expenditure," Ooi said.

Meanwhile, the government's easier rules are seen to appeal to private capital and help energize the investment setting. As part of the privatization proceeds are foreign currency, progress for gross international reserves and local currency were also seen favorable.

Job creation should be at its strongest as the real investment setting improves with construction providing the key source of employment. This could generate 180,000 net new jobs annually over the forecast horizon. If capex and residential demand cycles contribute to more construction activity," Ooi said.

Incomes from increased employment would augment the remittances in boosting the consumption cycle, the bank said.

Citi also anticipates additional easing measures from export recovery in 2019—another key source of growth seen to complement the investment recovery.

"After the subprime adjustment by global financial markets and the US economy for much of 2008, we await the firming up of external demand in 2009 that should bode well for exports," Citi said.

WHY BACKUP?

BECAUSE YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS TO BE

BACK UP

AND RUNNING WHEN DISASTER STRIKES!

Ensure your data never goes missing with HP StorageWorks. It offers a comprehensive range of solutions such as the HP StorageWorks Tape backup for the highest level of data protection, including free Data Protector Express (DPX)** backup software, for complete end-to-end business protection. It also offers complementary Disk Backup solutions, which help your business shorten its backup and recovery time. Giving you business continuity and minimum downtime, potentially saving you thousands of dollars and man-hours. So protect your business with HP StorageWorks today and ensure that you are able to recover when disaster strikes.

HP STORAGEWORKS
DAT USB TAPE DRIVE

From ₱48,500*

HP STORAGEWORKS
LTO SCSI TAPE DRIVE

From ₱235,000*

HP STORAGEWORKS
1/8 G2 TAPE AUTOLOADER

From ₱280,000*

HP STORAGEWORKS
MSL2024 TAPE LIBRARY

From ₱410,000*

* Vat Excluded

1-800-1441-6688
or (632) 867-3557
ph.contact@hp.com

Buying prices of tobacco increased

Gardenia invests ₱17.5M to widen reach

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GARDENIA BAKERIES (PHILIPPINES) INC. is investing P17.5 million in additional daily production capacity to expand its market reach.

Stephen Hinchliffe, Gardenia president and general manager, said the company has linked up with a facility that could produce 28,000 loaves of bread daily.

"We have invested P17.5 million for this facility in Tarlac, which has been producing for Gardenia since Dec. 1," Hinchliffe said.

He added that an additional P7.5 million would be invested in a panibrul plant in Laguna with a production capacity of 50,000 buns daily.

"These [investments] are all just for extending our market reach in Luzon," Hinchliffe said.

Gardenia expects to rack up P1.6 billion in revenues this year, a 23-percent increase from P1.3 billion in 2006.

The official explained that while consumption was not growing, Gardenia was able to increase revenues by expanding to market reach nationwide.

Ismail, who is also president of the Philippine Baking Industry Group, explained that industry volumes were expected to contract by 6.6 percent this year due to the increase in prices of inputs.

"Industry players are forced to raise prices of bread, panibrul, and other products and this would affect consumption which is already flattish in the year-year," he added.

Still, he said Gardenia expected revenues to reach P2 billion by end-2008, or an increase of 25 percent.

Ismail said the company has invested a total of P1 billion in the country so far, consisting of five production plants—three for loaf bread, one for panibrul and another for snack foods.

Move to encourage farmers to plant more

By Leonardo Baldoza Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

CABIDON CITY—THE TOBACCO industry is looking at better days ahead, following an agreement forged by the government, tobacco traders and farmers to raise the price of Sorsogon's top cash crop.

In a meeting on Monday, representatives of tobacco manufacturers and traders, farmers and the Sangguniang Bayan of Sorsogon province agreed to raise by P16 the buying price of Class A1 tobacco.

The buying price for tobacco under other classes was increased by P0.50.

With the price increase, Class A1 tobacco will sell at P84 a kilogram; Class A, P69; Class B, P67; Class C, P55; Class D, P50; Class E, P49; Class F1, P40; Class F2, P42; and scrap, P25.

"It is a good start to address the price of tobacco and other issues in the industry. I hope it will inspire our farmers to plant more this season," Bicol Sur Rep. Eric Singson said.

Singson and Gov. Sorgunzia Verceles Escoliano led local officials and leaders of farmers' groups in the quarter conference held at the SCIS offices in Quezon City.

The increase, they said, was the biggest granted as previous tripartite conferences usually yielded an increase of an average of P1.50. The conference is held every two years.

Singson said he would push for the passage of a bill that would require manufacturers to use at least 75 percent of locally produced tobacco in the production of cigarettes in the country.

Had the increase been hiked, Singson said, farmers would have added incentive not to plant tobacco and shift to other cash crops because they would not earn much from tobacco production.

The tobacco season starts in November and lasts until May.

Tobacco, particularly the Virginia type, is the top cash crop in the four tobacco-producing provinces of Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, La Union and Abra.

Ilocos Sur is the top Virginia tobacco producer in the country, with an annual production of 22 million kilograms worth about P1.1 billion. The province is also the biggest recipient of shares from the tobacco excise tax imposed by Republic Act No. 7171.

Five years ago, the four tobacco-producing provinces reached a combined harvest of P2.4 billion but this has gone down to only P788 million, Singson said.

Cigarette manufacturers used to rely on locally produced tobacco in their products, with an 80 percent usage of local raw materials. However, the ratio has been lowered, as local materials comprise only 30 percent while imported materials comprise 80 percent.

Escoliano expressed a tobacco summit last month to discuss the problems hobbling the industry. The major problem is the low prices of tobacco and the lack of assistance to farmers, he said.

At least P3 million from the provincial government's share from Bl. 7171 will be released to build tobacco flue curing barns and to help farmers.

"Tobacco helped build our province. It is the main source of livelihood of most farmers and their earnings help send their children to school. We need to help [the industry] regain its old glory," Escoliano said.

Gonzalo Gapuzan, a tobacco grower from Barangay Bagacay Tugo here, said his fellow farmers were satisfied with the price increase.

"It is good enough to cover the increase of expenses in planting tobacco," said Gapuzan, who joined the tripartite conference at the SCIS.

IPVG bid to buy stake in PeopleSupport under review

By Riza T. Olchondra

CONTACT CENTER OPERATOR PEOplesupport Inc. is reviewing the bid of listed IT firm IPVG Corp. to acquire a majority stake in the contact center for $103.3 million.

"PeopleSupport has announced that its review of the IPVG-ACI Capital proposal is ongoing and that they will respond with a recommendation to shareholders following its review," IPVG said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"UB market analysts have called the IPVG—ACI Capital Proposal, which was an 10 percent premium over PeopleSupport's closing price on Nov. 29, 2007, a 'fair one,'" the IT firm said.

IPVG earlier signed a memorandum of understanding with investment house ACI Capital Partners Ltd. to create a special purpose vehicle for the acquisition. IPVG currently owns 39 Contact Center Outsourcing Inc. (PCCO), which acquired the assets of Global Strife, a contact center operations in BPO Plaza, East wood City in Libis, earlier this year. IPC CC has operations in the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong and India. It also has investments in online gaming.

PeopleSupport, one of IPCCO's rival firms in the Philippine outsourcing industry, is listed in the US Nasdaq and has more than 6,000 call center seats.

Philcomsat faction elevates case to Court of Appeals

From page B1

of legal maneuvers by both camps to dominate the boards of the cash-rich firms.

Last month, the ailing Bildner group secured a coup after Malacañang appointed a fresh set of nominees to the boards of Philcomsat and PCIC, leaving only PHC under the control of the Lorenzo Pañlaker group.

The private shareholders, led by Bildner, have since signified their intention to wrest control of PHC from their rivals.

Al ranks is ideal PHC million to P1 billion of the group's cash and near-cash assets which the Bildners has accused the government nominees of dissipating over the years.

In their latest complaint to the Court of Appeals, the Lorenzo Pañlaker group said that Bildner's earlier complaint filed with the Makati RTC "is a patent violation of the writ issued by [the appellate court] and a circumvention of its clear directives" occupying the implementation of an earlier RTC decision.

"What is unfortunate is that the Presiding Judge Sabita Peñaco-Alaras of the RTC Makati City, Branch 62, is allowing and condoning the utter disregard of the writ of preliminary injunction issued by this honorable court," the group told the Court of Appeals. "The conduct of the proceedings before the Makati Court likewise disrespects and undermines the authority of this honorable court."

Interesting and inspiring Filipino readers for more than two decades through balanced news and features news the Philippine Daily Inquirer has consistently overcome the country's number 1 newspaper. Our heartfelt thanks for making the Inquirer a part of your daily reading habit.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, Inquirer, grant 25 lucky readers their wishes – from the exciting and the rewarding, your loved one to a romantic one-day countryside tour. 25th wedding anniversary or a respite travel can be known about you daily, even in 200 words or less, tell us.

1) How long have you been reading the Philippine Daily Inquirer?
2) What do you like most about the Inquirer that we don't do, what do you like least?
3) What is your number 1 wish that Inquirer can grant you and why?

INQUIRER

Stocks bounce, dollar firms ahead of Fed decision

Hong Kong, South Korean stock markets lead region's gainers

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARES bounced and the dollar firmed yesterday following crisis-driven coordinated cash injections into struggling financial firms and in anticipation of a US interest rate cut.

Markets have fully priced in a quarter point cut in the Federal Reserve's benchmark rate later on Tuesday, but worry persists US policymakers could be disappointed by early yesterday afternoon, tracking similar Wall Street gains and erasing Monday's losses.

The MSCI index is about 8 percent below its Nov. 1 record high, but has rallied nearly 20 percent this week, triple the rise for MSCI's key world stock index.

Across the region, Hong Kong and South Korean stock markets led gainers, rising around 1 percent.

Investors snapped up Asian financial stocks, encouraged by news that some big cash-rich banks found the battered sector attractive.

UBS on Monday revealed a $13 billion writedown, joining a growing list of casualties of the subprime crisis, but also reported some encouraging inflows of some $13.5 billion from Singapore and the Middle East. Similarly, HSBC said buyout from Minheng Hwesa has agreed to invest $1 billion in the company.

"The UBS news is big. It brought home some the powers of oil money and sent an encouraging message that there is enough money out there and the financial world is in no danger of falling into a crisis," said Hitoshi Tomomoto, CEO of Pacific Asset Management Japan.

South Korea's Woori Finance Holdings rose 2.5 percent and Australia's top investment bank Macquarie Group gained 3 percent.

Traders said markets have fully factored in a quarter point cut to the benchmark rate to 4.25 percent, but uncertainty over the Fed's message about outlook for next year kept many investors sidelined.

Government bonds, which usually benefit from rate cuts, extended their overnight retreat as market players further unwound bets on an aggressive half-point cut after surprisingly firm data from the troubled US housing market.

Japan's benchmark 10-year bond yield hit a one-month high at 1.500 percent, reaching overnight bids to 1% Treasuries.

US debt prices, however, edged up in Asian trade.

Receding fears of a sharp US economic slowdown and fading expectations of aggressive Fed rate cuts helped the dollar, which hit a one-month high against the yen at 111.85, before retreating to 111.80, still way above a 2-½ low of 107.22 yen hit last month.

The euro was little changed against the dollar at around $1.4730 and a touch firmer against the yen.

Traders said the dollar was likely to hold steady until the Fed decision, with high yielding currencies such as the Australian dollar and the sterling most likely to benefit from recovering risk appetite at the expense of the low-yielding yen.

Oil prices edged up above $88 as dollar fog slowed imports along a key Texas waterway.

Our crude remained well below last month's record high near $100 with forecasts of mild winter in the United States and lingering concerns about the health of the US economy suggesting softer demand in the world's top consumer market.

Reuters

US SECRETARY of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt (left) speaks with vice chair of China's General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), Wei Chuan Zhong, during a visit to the Haipian Food and Beverage plant in Beijing. Leavitt toured the factory as China warned rising protectionist sentiment in the United States was damaging trade ties. AFP

China's consumer inflation blazed to 11-yr high in Nov.

BEIJING—CHINA'S ANNUAL CONSUMER price inflation sped to an 11-year high in November at 6.9 percent, with new signs that price pressures were spreading beyond food in the broader economy.

China also logged a $30.3 billion trade surplus in November, data published on Tuesday showed. The level dipped below October's record of $237.1 billion, but the country's surging exports were barely dented by the slowing US economy.

China's gaping trade surplus—along with the undervalued yuan and other policies seen by foreign critics as boosting the surplus—will feature heavily at high-level Sino-American talks set for this week in Beijing.

But economists are giving closer scrutiny to inflation, which has been driven largely by food costs that make up a third of the CPI basket.

The incident pointed to pressures surging beyond food items, where annual price rises were still highest, up 18.2 percent in November, to the broader economy, from utilities to travel costs.

The nonfood consumer price index climbed 1.6 percent in November year on year, above the 1.2 percent increase in October, and the sharpest rise this year.

"That's more of a source of concern, as it decides that there's more tightness in commodity markets or in other areas of possible overheating," said David Cohen, economist at Action Economics in Singapore.

Full-year consumer price inflation is likely to register a rise of about 4.7 percent, which would be the highest since 1996, chief economist of the National Bureau of Statistics, Sun Jingyuan, said on Tuesday.

Last week, China's top leaders announced they would shift to a "tight" monetary policy from what they called a decade-long "prudent" stance. The stubbornly high consumer price inflation should reinforce their determination, analysts said.

"We expect the central bank to respond to the strong inflation data with additional tightening measures," Yi Gang, Goldman Sachs economist in Hong Kong, said in a note to clients.

Gu Shaozhing, the central bank raised the proportion of deposits that banks must hold in reserve by a full percentage point to 14.5 percent as part of its drive to tame credit growth and inflation.

It was the 10th reserve requirement increase this year by the central bank, which has also raised interest rates five times in 2007.

China's exports grew at 22.6 percent in November from the same period a year ago, while imports climbed 25.3 percent, both figures broadly in line with the pace set in October.

"Even though China's exports to the US have slowed down, its exports to the Europe and the Middle East and other countries' demand markets have held up really well," Tao Wang, chief economist at Bank of America in Beijing said.

Reuters

Consumer confidence in Japan lowest since '03

TOKYO—JAPANESE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE fell in November to its lowest level in nearly four years as rising energy costs and grocery prices turned off householders, a government survey showed on Tuesday.

The sixth fall in confidence in the past seven months adds to worries about consumption, which makes up the lion's share of the economy, and will do nothing to alter expectations that the very low interest rates are stuck on hold until late next year.

The Japanese government-released sentiment was "worsening"—the most negative word it has used to describe household sentiment in almost five years.

"It is tough for consumers as prices are on a rise while a recovery in wages remains sluggish," said Shigeaki Hasegawa, economist at Ind-ichi Life Research Institute.

"The survey suggests that consumption in November was probably weak and will remain sluggish for a while."

The Cabinet Office's household sentiment index, which includes views on income and jobs in homes with more than two residents, was 39.0 in November, its lowest since December 2003.

A reading below 50 suggests pessimism, although it has rarely been above that mark in 25 years—not even in boom times.

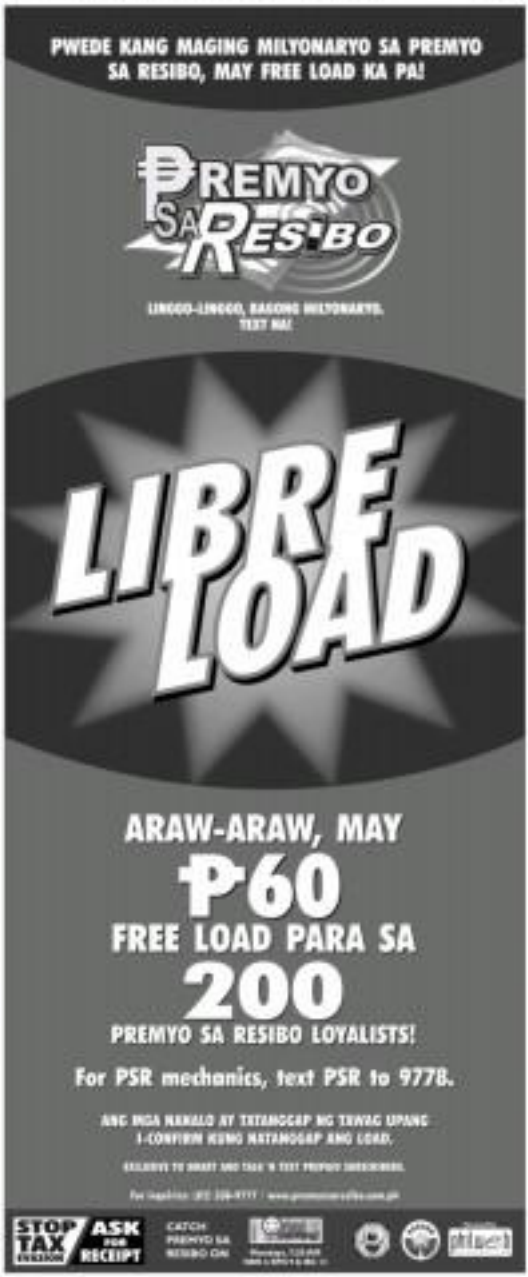
After nearly a decade of falling prices, Japanese people now face rises in prices for daily necessities and energy costs, with 62 percent of those surveyed expecting the cost of living to go up in the next year.

Rising prices of gasoline, heating oil, bread, mayonnaise and other food items have been widely reported in Japan, where wages have been stubbornly weak despite falling unemployment and official price figures still show mild deflation.

To ease the pain from rising oil prices, Japan said on Tuesday it would subsidize home heating oil in cold areas and increase financial help for small firms.

The weak figures, from a survey of 3,500 households with at least two residents, came a day after another government survey showed investment among service sectors at a 4-1/2 year low.

Reuters



Globe backs 2nd Micro Entrepreneur Trade Fair

IN LINE WITH THE VISION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENterprises (SMEs) to work together in leading our country towards economic growth, Globe backs the 2nd Micro Entrepreneur Trade Fair, an event that provides a venue for showcasing not only the products of SMEs, but also a venue where SMEs come together to foster a mutually beneficial alliance.

This year's fair, dubbed "Negosyong Pinoy 2007", showcased different business opportunities in all segments, highlighting home-grown businesses, products and services offered to aspiring or growing entrepreneurs. The event also housed of an exhibit of suppliers, service providers, financial institutions and presentations from various business owners as testimonial speakers and clinics.

"Negosyong Pinoy 2007" is organized by the Center for Small Entrepreneurs Inc (CSEI) a non-stock, non-profit organizational center whose primary thrust is to promote entrepreneurship through entrepreneur building and development with its one-on SMEs.

Globe Business has actively campaigned for the empowerment of SMEs. It has partnered with both the public and private sector to help micro entrepreneurs establish their businesses. Globe takes pride in rousing up with other believers to the potential of SMEs, hence the company zidoorfly supports organizations such as CSE and its projects, like the Micro Entrepreneurs Trade Fair.

DIAGEO PARTY LAUNCH FEATURES OVER 100 BRANDS

The world's leading premium drinks business raised another big toast with the launch of its Diageo Party, with more than 100 products. Diageo marked the occasion in a Christmas Bar & Restaurant in Makati as an extraordinary way of celebrating life everyday and everywhere with Diageo brands. The brands offer consumers a variety of ways to mark big occasions their lives and brighten small ones', says John Arroyo, managing director of Diageo Philippines, Shown, from left, are Noel Dan Ok, with Diageo executives Agnes Lundy, Charles Palanca III, Charles Palanca II, John Arroyo and Jaypee Evangelista.

Starmaker mounts pyro musical shows

"We like the way the audience react in our weekly shows at Mall of Asia. They appreciate our shows," says Ong Tan, managing director of Starmaker Fireworks, the country's number one fireworks and special effects manufacturer. Viewers to the pyrotechnical shows at the Mall of Asia must have seen the award-winning fireworks that continue to amaze thousands of visitors to the MOA every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. "We always give our audiences something new and different. We present special effects they have not seen before. We try to do different things every week," he says. The fireworks display is accompanied by music which is usually happy and danceable. "Hilarious are a happy people. They love to celebrate. Music is one thing that augments our pyrotechnics from other pyrotechnical shows all over the world," Shows at the Mall of Asia, Pedestrians and dubbing Town Center land between the Asia Mall Extension. Starmaker is also preparing a New Year show at the Mall of Asia. For inquiries, call Starmaker at 636-2656 or visit www.starmakerfireworks.com.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Ambassador Bldg., S. Roxas, Forum, Cubao City

December 13, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following employers/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Nationality	Position
1. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Chinese	Operator
2. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Taiwanese	Manager
3. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Indian	Manager
4. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Japanese	Engineer
5. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Japanese	Technical Assistant
6. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Japanese	Manager / Line Supervisor
7. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Japanese	Manager / Line Supervisor
8. [illegible]	Mr. Name / Nat. Japanese	Manager / Line Supervisor

If you have any information/document on the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ JR., CESO III
Regional Director

PIA - December 13, 2007

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

PROJECT NO. 1
DESCRIPTION: SUPPLY OF IT EQUIPMENT
LOCATION: Commission on Human Rights G/F Complex, BAAT Building, Commonwealth Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
APPROVED BUDGET: P 1,000,000.00 (Regular Capital Outlay)
PRE-BID CONFERENCE: December 21, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Conference Room
SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS: January 11, 2008, 10:00 a.m. CHR Conference Room

SPECIFICATION

No. of Units	Description
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	800 GB exp. (USB 2.0 interface) External Hard drive
Nineteen (19)	Small Form Factor PC (With built-in power supply)
Ten (10)	Desktop PC
Two (2)	Desktop PC
Nineteen (19)	Printer, Fax, Scanner and Copier (all-in-one)
Sixteen (16)	Mini XP Professional OEM (With Service Pack 2)

Bidding Documents shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable amount of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (Php 1,000.00). The Bidding Documents may be obtained personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

PROJECT NO. 2
DESCRIPTION: SUPPLY OF IT EQUIPMENT
LOCATION: G/F Complex, BAAT Building, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
APPROVED BUDGET: Php 600,000.00 (GF) Fund)
PRE-BID CONFERENCE: December 21, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Conference Room
SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS: January 11, 2008, 10:00 a.m. Conference Room

SPECIFICATIONS

No. of Units	Item Description
Two (2)	Desktop PC
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	Server Machine
Two (2)	Inkjet Color Printer PC with Built-in power supply
Two (2)	Mini XP Professional OEM (With Service Pack 2)

Bidding Documents shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable amount of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (Php 500.00). The Bidding Documents may be obtained by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

Interested bidders are requested to submit Letter of Intent and photocopies of their Latest Certificate of Registration or Business Name (with original for authentication) from December 17-19, 2007.

Eligibility Statement Forms shall be issued on **December 17-19, 2007**. Duly accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be returned to a Bonds' processor and shall be submitted to the Chairman, CHR-BAC, Commission on Human Rights, Salvador Araneta Building, G/F Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City from December 20-21, 2007.

Bid documents shall be made available only to eligible bidders by presentation upon payment of fee of the BAC Secretariat upon presentation of the original Certificate of Eligibility.

Bid Proposals shall be submitted in two (2) sealed boxes accompanied with the name of the project to be bid and the name of the bidder or bidder's representative. The Bid Proposals shall be opened by the Chairman, BAC Bidding, G/F Complex Diliman, Quezon City. The Bids Envelope shall contain the accomplished Technical Statements and the Sealed Envelope shall contain the Financial Statements.

All particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Submission and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The CHR reserves the right to reject any or all bids/proposals, declare a failure of bidding if there is only one bidder, refuse to award any bid/proposal, or waive any defect therein to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) SHIRLEY D. BALLARO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

BAC-Doc. 12, 2007

TeleTech holds biggest BPO party this Christmas

TELETECH, "THE LARGEST AND FASTEST GROWING BPO company in the Philippines, played host to the biggest gathering of call center agents in celebration of its coming year for the company.

No less than 8,000 employees gathered Dec 8 at the Glow City strip in Pasig City for the company's holiday party.

Brian Dylan, one of the company's current heads noting to lead the show Elizabeth Rodriguez, Vice President for Human Resources and Training for Manila and Pasig.

The presentation include bands, score dancing, a fashion show and even a "TeleTech Idol Show" along.

"This demonstrates the other side of skills we cannot possess, not only in providing customers with world-class BPO services. It's a celebration of the Filipino talent by itself," said Manik Pareek, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia.

TeleTech is also celebrating a milestone in its five-year history in the Philippines. The country recently achieved its target for 15,000 employees, making it among the biggest BPO operators in the country today.

"We expect to grow even further in the next few years and acquire more diverse talent, both as world-class BPO operators and likewise as an investment," Manik said.

8,000 TeleTech employees party with bandmate in Glow City, Pasig

BRIAN DYLAN'S TeleTech enjoys five-year presence, global service delivery, speaks to the biggest gathering of call center agents in celebration of a coming year for the company.

MANIK PAREEK, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following employers/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Nationality	Position
KEYNOTE ONLINE, INC. [illegible]	Manny Cruz Jose [illegible]	Manager
MARINE BENEFITS ASSISTANCE SERVICES, INC. [illegible]	Jose Francisco [illegible]	President
BITUEN ASIA LTD. [illegible]	Orlando Luis [illegible]	General Manager
COLLEGE BOARD (NEW) PHILIPPINES INC. [illegible]	Delgado Agata [illegible]	Liaison Officer Consultant-2 (Specialist)
SUN SUN MARITIME SHIPPING INC. [illegible]	Tanangka Hao [illegible]	Senior Accountant
HANDA ENGLISH TUTORIAL SERVICES [illegible]	Tanggo Chai [illegible]	Marketing Manager
AMAZING PHIL. THEATRE INC. [illegible]	Jai Tsung Kwok [illegible]	Consultant
JAMES J. BOYLE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS INC. [illegible]	Jung Ho Kuk [illegible]	Manager
ENGLISH CHRIST MISS [illegible]	Kim Cheolsoo [illegible]	Senior Consultant
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LTD. [illegible]	Dubal Debabrata Kumar [illegible]	Systems Analyst

If you have any information/document on the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

EDMUNDO G. ARANDIA
OIC Regional Director

LMB-December 13, 2007

Glycemic index gab Dec. 13

THE SCHOOL OF NUTRITION of the Philippine Women's University and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology will hold a symposium "Glycemic Index: A Tool for Wellness," on Dec. 13, 1 p.m. at the Ballroom 3 of Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Belonick's speaker is Thomas Mi Wolever, professor at the Department of Nutritional Sciences of University of Toronto, Canada and president of Glycemic Index (GI) Laboratories-in-Canada.

He'll lecture for his works on the symposium theme. Wolever's research interests include the effects of dietary carbohydrates on human physiology and metabolism.

The visiting expert said his presentation will illustrate the importance of GI, a method of assessing the quality of dietary carbohydrates according to the extent to which the food raises the blood sugar.

"The symposium aims to inform the public, notably health professionals, food manufacturers and regulatory board members of its importance in human health and diseases and will also enable the applicability of the GI concept in nutrition labeling," he said.

The program starts with a prayer to be led by PWU chaplain Msgr. Hernando Coronel, followed with the welcome remarks by Chancellor Dr. Jeremy Lanuza.

An overview and historical perspective of GI will be delivered by Dr. Trinidad Trinidad of DOST.

The panel of resource is the lecture of Wolever who will be introduced by Dr. Leocadio Paz-Ladipit, dean of PWU School of Nutrition, and Dr. Lourdes Ojeda of St. Luke's Medical Center, Global Chairman of Nestle Philippines Inc and Dr. Leticia Gonzalez of the DOST.

Presiding the open forum to be presided by associate dean Dr. Imelda Bruna, PWU president, a Dr. Amelia B. Reyes who will give an inspirational message.

To present the synthesis and summary of the lecture is Dr. Hiroko Capuyanan of DOST, while Executive Director Dr. Jaime Montoya of PCHRD-DOST will deliver the closing remarks. Serving as master of ceremonies is Anita Hilario of DOST.

The one-day lecture is sponsored by Cargill, Nestle Nutrition, and Del Monte.

Art and music under one roof Dec. 15!

FOR DECADES, TATTOOS AND rock and roll have always been associated with rebellion and counter culture-both a badge of one's individuality and expression. What Gear the people behind many of the nation's loveliest outfits, presents "Outshine '07", a fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition which is going to be held on Dec. 15 at the Philippine Trade and Training Center (MITC) Philippine Tattoo Arts Guild (PHTAG) president Finky Da Jinx goes in depth on the mindset of the tattoo industry, and there's no better way to showcase this than through a competition that features not only visual artists but performing artists as well. Join in the festivities, Exclusive Sam, Counter Love, 3-Cry, Greyhound3, Kadenajan, Kamikazee, Mindset, Queso Sinag, Sinosikat, Slapshock, Urbandub and Valley of Drones. Tickets are available at the gate and at the Skinworks Tattoo and Body Piercing Shop (Pasay) 519 Taft Corner Arcade, Pasay City) with contact number 846-6851.

CITYPLACE

PHASE 1

The New Face of Chinatown

Construction on full swing

Give your loved ones the gift of love and joy to share and to cherish, season after season. CityPlace.

Keep your family in the lap of luxury in the heart of Chinatown. Choose from spacious two- to four-bedroom homes finished with thoughtful touches. A bathtub in the master's bedroom. Panoramic views of Manila and its breathtaking sunsets. An imposing lobby with four high-speed elevators. 24-hour security and service.

Relax and rejuvenate yourself in your own playground seven stories above Chinatown. Stroll the Runway or a landscaped garden. Stroll along a jogger's walkway. Use swimming while the kids have fun in the wading pool or playground. Enjoy a siesta in the gym or cavort in the game room. There's a day care center for kids and a business center for their parents, along with a clubhouse and function rooms.

Say goodbye to those long, stressful trips to the mall. At CityPlace, you're just an elevator ride away from a three-level shopping paradise. A few steps away, the CityPlace Richmonde Hotel is the place to do business with elevation.

And the best of Chinatown are just a calèche ride away—from eateries & Chinese schools to the shops along Ongpin and the offices along Quintin Paredes. All close by are Binondo's historic streets and Manila's University Belt and historical landmarks.

The season gets the gift that lasts—and lasts. CityPlace.

A Landmark Residential Development of

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

www.megaworldcorp.com

Own a 2-Bedroom unit for as low as
₱23,800 a month

Visit us this holiday season at our new showroom:
Burke Plaza, San Fernando corner Sta. Cruz, Binondo, Manila
Tels.: 241-7012 • 241-6563 • 241-8000

MOTORING

Filipino ingenuity and perseverance shine through once more

Handcrafted to harness the sun, slice the wind

By Tonee B. Salazar

SIAAL, the rookie Philippine solar car entry to the recently concluded 3000-km World Solar Challenge held in Australia, placed 11th out of 20 competitors in the race challenge class. That finish seems unremarkable, but if you look at the unique manner in which Siaag was created, one would look at Siaag—and its four—in a new light.

Siaag's plug and mold were manufactured from, hundredfold in other words, while competitors used computer controlled machines.

Plug, a synonym to gay used for metal casting, is the shape of the solar car made of polyurethane foam. This forms the basis for making the mold of the car.

Siaag, furthermore, didn't undergo a wind tunnel test, but instead ran software to simulate wind aerodynamics.

These small but crucial facts about Siaag's creation were revealed by engineer Bene Fernandez, Team Siaag's overall technical team leader, to Inquirer Motoring recently.

Competitors used handcrafted shells, but there used Chi machines for the plug and mold," he said.

A bit different

Fernandez added that the process of making the Siaag shell was a bit different, too. It had not been "vacuum baked" and there was no vacuum-make compared to competitors."

"We were unique, in our case, the plug, the mold and the final shell were handcrafted," he said.

Fernandez added that due to the unavailability of a wind tunnel, the team was encouraged enough to determine the drag co-efficient using a software.

He likened the handcrafting of the plug and mold as that of a typical tabanocrafted to a

KIA DOES A NADAL!

SCORES A STUNNING UPSET IN THE 2007 CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

FOR THE FIRST TIME A KOREAN BRAND, KIA, GARNERED THE MOST NUMBER OF MAJOR AWARDS AT THE 4TH CAR OF THE YEAR (COTY) PHILIPPINES AWARDS PROGRAM WHICH WAS HELD AT THE ROCKWELL TENT IN MAKATI CITY LAST NOVEMBER 15, 2007 BY THE CAR AWARDS GROUP INC. (CAGI) ORGANIZER OF COTY, UPSETTING OTHER POPULAR JAPANESE, AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CAR BRANDS.

CATEGORY	WINNER
BASIC SUBCOMPACT AWARD	KIA PICANTO 1.1L EX2
EXECUTIVE SUB-COMPACT AWARD	KIA RIO 1.4L SEDAN
COMPACT VAN & /MPV AWARD	KIA CARENS 2.0L CRDi
EXECUTIVE VAN & MPV AWARD	KIA CARNIVAL 2.9L CRDi (Short Wheelbase)

COMPACT VAN & MPV OF THE YEAR

THE NEW KIA CARENS with CRDi DIESEL ENGINE

KIA CARENS HAS ALSO BEEN AWARDED THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE RATING

★★★★★

Actual unit may vary from photo

WINDSHIELD CRACK REPAIR

NOT REPLACEMENT! EMISSION CTEC

MANILA MIDWEST

The Best Cars of 2007

MY DRIFT

Andre Palmer

HYUNDAI Getz

Snappy, freshened X3 features new engine

By Tessa R. Salazar

BMW'S SPORTS ACTIVity vehicle with the "athletic Asian physique" (as we call the X3's mini-me version) sports a new engine, a fresh interior and exterior design as well as some new high-tech stuff.

The X3 magic has not yet worn out, as it retains the nimble handling, admirable cornering and braking with the touch of that stiff ride.

The new X3 3.0si makes its debut with its in-line six-cylinder engine that features a lightweight composite magnesium/aluminum crankcase. It weighs just 165 kg and features variable Valvetronic valve control.

Power

The 3.0si's power can be tapped through a six-speed automatic transmission that features the latest in conventional technology and particularly powerful software standard (reduced reaction and gearshift times by up to 30 percent compared to conventional AT/AT systems, according to engineers).

Our test-conscious SAV enthusiasts, try zoning the 3.0si that features the four-cylinder power unit with the latest generation xenon+ rail direct injection.

The specs indicate that it has a max output of 160 hp, with output at 330 Nm all the way from 2,000 to 2,500 rpm.

The acceleration (according to the manufacturer's spec) is at 10.1 seconds 0 to 100 kph, with a top speed of 188 kph.

The 2.5si, on the other hand (with just 218 hp/220 hp/more than the previous 4X 2.5SE) and peak torque of 250 Nm, accelerates from 0 to 100 kph in 8.1 seconds with a top speed of 210 kph. Average fuel consumption in the 3S cycle is a respectable 18.1 km/liter.

Agility

The X3 evokes its agility to BMW's permanent intelligent xDrive all-wheel-drive system, which feeds the power of the engine quickly and precisely to where it can be used best.

Aside from ensuring steering stability and traction, its new DSC or dynamic stability control optimizes the effect of the brakes by increasing brake pressure as required to supply the brakes all on.

The DSC competition unit's crucial vehicle controls as the anti-lock brakes, anti-skid stability control, and the full dynamic control.

The dynamic brake control also automatically maximizes brake pressure in an emergency when the driver is required to apply the brakes all on.

NEW rear lights feature features red-all LED light-class provide striking sight design. The styling of rear bodywork has been changed with color-coded panels extending down the bodywork.

Ready to roll

Handcrafted

Filipinos among the best

The FIA promotes greener motoring

RACING IS NOT THE ONLY CONCERN of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) although it makes and implements rules for motor sports worldwide including Formula One, the World Rally Championship, Le Mans, the Indianapolis 500 and the Race of Champions.

The FIA is also concerned about the chance for dramatic action to stop global warming which is the subject of the ongoing Climate Change Conference in Bali attended by delegates from nearly 190 nations. Although automobiles today are cleaner and more fuel-efficient as a result of improvements in technology and fuels that reduce both toxic emissions and the quantity of carbon dioxide emitted per vehicle, the FIA knows that the development and deployment of low-carbon, transport fuel-efficient technologies is the key to future mobility as demand for automobiles services worldwide.

ON THE ROAD

Atoy Sevilla-Mendoza

Target

Last October, the FIA general assembly ratified the global problem of climate change and called on the United Nations to adopt the first ever worldwide target for carbon dioxide emissions in passenger cars, 140 g/km as part of a new international framework for greener motoring. This could serve as an international target that all cars aspire to, the FIA noted, adding that the benchmark would provide a way of measuring progress of the motor car emissions from municipalities.

Although only about 10 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are attributable to road transport, this level is gradually increasing in all regions of the world. Currently there are 600 million motor vehicles in the world and by 2020 this number is forecast to double by 2020 with the fastest growth of motorization occurring in emerging economies such as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China).

While common control technologies such as the catalyst and filters are reducing the automobile's impact on ambient air quality, the challenge remains to encourage global application of these technologies, especially in newly motorizing countries where urban air pollution adversely affects public health.

Responsible mobility

On the other hand, although the FIA and its member clubs have for many years supported responsible mobility and promoted desired, low carbon-intensive and more fuel-efficient motoring, the FIA contends that policies and measures to improve air quality, mitigate climate change and promote fuel economy must always be cost-effective and shared by all stakeholders involved. It would be both unfair and ineffective to concentrate policy endeavors a single sector such as road transport while ignoring other sources of roads to GHG emissions such as livestock, which is estimated to account for 18 percent of total 22401 emissions measured in carbon dioxide equivalents.

To address further progress in improving air quality and promoting fuel economy, action is required in three main areas.

1. Promoting new vehicle, fuel and component technologies.

2. Improving road network design and management.

3. Incentives and information to promote greener automotive technologies, driving and mobility choices by the consumer.

Cost-effective

Regarding the first main area, the FIA general assembly recommended that industry, in partnership with governments, continue to invest in cost-effective low carbon and cleaner automotive technologies across a range of vehicle characteristics, including aerodynamics, combustion efficiency, drive-train, driver information devices, energy recovery and hybrids, rolling resistance and weight.

Mutually supportive product development to improve fuel quality and alternative fuels is required including natural gas and bio-fuels, the FIA said, provided that the latter can become more cost effective and will not harm biodiversity and global food production. "As these technology innovations come to market, governments should adopt policies that encourage the use of a wider mix of private and fuel systems to enhance consumer choice and gradually reduce excessive dependence on fossil fuels," the FIA declared.

In the third main area, the FIA general assembly recommended that governments work together with automobile clubs to support a comprehensive program of consumer information encouraging responsible mobility and the purchase of clean, low carbon-intensive vehicles, fuels and components which will not just benefit the environment but also reduce the cost of motoring. To provide accurate and independent information about the environmental performance of automotive-related products, the FIA proposes EU-labelling and eco-rating.

Eco-driving

The FIA also recommends the development of training programs to encourage fuel-efficient driving and the integration of such courses into driver licensing and safety training schemes. "Eco-driving" can be supported by the state-of-the-board drivers' info devices such as consumption and gear shift indicators to aid the driver in maximizing more fuel-efficient behavior and thereby reduce fuel/log costs.

Corollary to all these, FIA member clubs are now tasked to promote a "Make Cars Green" awareness campaign and a 14-point Guide for Greener Motoring, as the only FIA member club in the country, the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) assumes a new challenge.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else get your way.

PORSCHE 928

TRANSPORT TRIVIA

By Emerson Cortes

Porsche's timeless superstar

ASIDE THE MOON (BOOKLOG) over some Tom Cruise, that car has drawn oohhhs in the 1983 Hollywood film "Risky Business." But the stainless hood's dwindled yes for the superstar Porsche 928 as it is going to appear in another film soon.

The 1979 Porsche, distinctive on the dash or hand dash-like appearance and its ability to gobble up stretches of road in no time, was the car that Cruise drove in the movie. Porsche enthusiasts have called this the most famous Porsche 928 in the world.

Despite say that a certain Louis Johnson of Denver now owns the famous car, Johnson is said to be producing a documentary film about it and targeting entry slot in the Sundance Film Festival in 2008. He film "Quest for 928/28" documents his journey to find and acquire the long lost movie car from the late 90s movie.

According to reviews, the Porsche 928 is a great luxury (GT) automobile, a high-performance reliable designed for safe, fortable long distance driving, fully laden with a powerful motor and the best in luxury features.

It was designed to fly down motorways for hours in excess of 100 mph, and was equally adept on curves and twisty mountain roads. Porsche AG of Germany made the 928 from 1978 to 1995, and it was considered to be one of their most expensive offerings.

In the late 70s it was the fastest production road car on the world, recording 172 mph on the air flats in Utah in 1986, using an early 928S4. Porsche's marketing slogan became "It's about as fast as you can go without having to run either fossil."

The car's security engineer is said to several other improvements such as the "Mammoth Axle," an early all-wheel steering system that provides greater rear wheel steering in certain off-throttle cornering situations.

The 928 continued to evolve through the years, to final version some in 1992 and 1995. During that time it was the most expensive (in, costing $100,000.

But the pricey GS's comes with a handful of airplanes; it had the high performance, glamor and ergonomics that truly made it a superstar automobile around the world. It was the car to have a huge fat bank and can super-form custom manufacturer's sport and grand touring models. It is currently on exhibit at the Forney Museum of Transportation in Denver, Colorado.

Reference: http://forney-museum.org

to harness . . .

Previous page B2-1

THE G Car could run 80 km at a maximum speed of 40 kph.

CARORO (second left) shows his G Car to Mayor Belmonte (second inside) and Plana.

Banking on electricity to power cars

Text and photos by Charles E. Buken

OF ALL ALTERNATIVES to oil for powering transportation, electricity holds the greatest promise. So argues inventor, engineer Gerry Carero, who recently unveiled his state version of an electric powered car.

Called the G Car, Carero's creation is classified as "pure electric car." That is, it runs entirely on batteries and needs recharged to replenish its power.

"The G Car represents a cleaner way to move around the city. While this type of mobility is nearly found inside golf courses and sometimes in posh residential communities, I don't see why it can't be used in public roads," Carero said.

To make his P500,000 project suitable for public roads, he used tubular space frame as well as fiberglass in the body to make it safe for the occupants during impacts.

"The G Car's design is influenced by the Philippine Eagle, hence the beak-shaped front facia and doors that open up like wings. But more than just a design, the body will help the G Cars occupants during impacts.

Safety

Indeed, safety is a paramount concern as aside from the protective shell, the G Car also provides the usual safety features of regular cars like a disc (front) and drum (rear) brakes," Carero explained, adding that driving the car is as easy as one only has to steer as well as use the accelerator and brakes.

No more gear shifting and don't worry about wet road conditions as the tarcas the car is safe enough to protect the occupants from electric shocks.

The G Car could run 80 kilometers hours in full charge. (But takes 8 hours when plugged on a standard electrical socket) although it could be driven for 48 km using a fast charger (that 4 hours).

THE G Car is styled after the Philippine eagle with its beak-like front facia and doors that open like wings.

OTHER E Car prototypes created by Carero.

"It seats two adults and two children and at a maximum speed of 40 kph, I believe the G Car is perfect for Metro Manila's stop-and-go traffic as well as short commutes in the city, especially that the car does not consume electricity while idling or parking," Carero explained.

Worth of electricity

Carero said he used a 48 volt deep cycle battery. "The owner only has to spend P48 in P60 worth of electricity in order to fully charge the battery."

Carero lamented that the G Car was developed five years ago but had a tough time getting supporters.

"Finally, the Quezon City Parks Development Foundation Inc. was generous enough to support us in our mission to make the public more aware of electric cars and how could this type of vehicle solve our worsening air pollution," Carero said.

Charito Plana, president of the foundation, said the tie-up with Carero will allow park goers of the Quezon Memorial Circle to drive the G Car around the central park for a fee (P200).

Makes sense

"It only makes sense to allow the G Car in Quezon Memorial Circle since the car emits no pollutant in the air and thus this will also enable the public to appreciate the advantages of using an electric car for transport," Plana said.

She also reported that she is helping Carero coordinate with Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte for other possible support, especially in allowing the vehicle to become an alternative mode of transport in Quezon City.

"The mayor is very interested because aside from running purely on battery, the G Car could be configured to use solar energy. Quezon City could lead the others in the use of clean and renewable source of energy for transport," Carero said.

Aside from the four-seater G Car, Carero also said he has allowed the Quezon Memorial Circle guava to drive his other prototypes.

"This will not only be the people know that we now have the capacity to build our own brand of electric car but that it can be practically driven even on the road," Carero said.

LIFESTYLE

What did you do to change the World in 2007?

People like measuring the year that's about to pass in different ways: going back to the biggest **headlines**, singling out the noisiest **newsmakers**, counting the **new things** they've bought, the **places** they've visited, the **experiences** that have rocked them to the core. We know because we do that, too.

But this time, we want people to **look back** at 2007 in a different way.

We want to measure the **past year** with good deeds—in hopes of **encouraging** more people to make a **difference** next year.

You've had a little over **11 months**. What did you do with all that time?

We asked people, what did you do to change the world in 2007?

The **essays and pictures** in the next pages are their answers.

"All you want for Christmas, we deliver with Sun 24/7."

"With over 800 branches nationwide, LBC found a reliable, cost-efficient and convenient communications partner in Sun."

Chris Gutierrez, VP Procurement

LBC – "Hari ng Padala", gets even busier this Christmas season to make sure higher volumes of deliveries are made on time, all the time. With over 800 branches nationwide, and offices in Asia, the US and Canada, LBC gets ready to meet the Pinoy holiday rush with its fast-moving, and sun-rain delivery service—with a lot of help coming from its communications partner, Sun Cellular.

"Sun provides reliable and on-spot communication service that is essential to our operations, while helping us keep our costs significantly down," says Chris. It is so cost effective that LBC has connected all its branches with Sun's 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service. As a result, coordination between the head office and the branches is so much faster and easier especially since calls can be made to all branches without them worrying about the costs.

LBC and Sun are definitely in touch with it's pinoy everywhere because Sun delivers communications. It's for a long. That's why Trusts LBC, relationship!"

24/7 CALLS & TEXTS UNLIMITED

24/7 STEEL RELIABILITY

www.sun.com.ph Hotline: 151-0000

SUN CELLULAR

Sun network, better value

Changing the world one click at a time

Text and photos by Mae Quirin
Contributor

I LOVE TAKING PICTURES.

Ever since my dad handed me his Kodak Pocket Instamatic 60 when I was in fourth grade, I've relished the idea of capturing significant moments, places, and people and freezing them on photo paper.

My favorite subjects are people, and each photo I take and revisit brings back memories and stories connected with these people. A few of those memories are sad, but most of them are pleasant. I am happiest when I'm with my sisters, just making everything as an active participant and quiet observer at the same time.

In May of this year, a photography group I am active with, Lo-cmobilcity, was invited to an event in Antonesto Arellano called "Walkin, Please," which was a concert-cum-arts-fair set up to promote clean and human relations. I participated and went about as I would any other event. I took photos and tried to capture the energy of that moment.

But that evening also allowed me to reconnect with an old friend of mine: Greg Bailey, one of the prime movers of Touch Ed (which organized the event) and also kicked off my current endeavor with Touch Ed.

PRISON PORTRAITS. The author spent time taking pictures of prisoners at the New Bilibid Prison and mailing the photos to their families.

Capping out

Volunteerism is not new to me. Ever since I can remember, my family has been active when it comes to providing support and help to those who need them. In 1986, when Cardinal Sin called on the citizenry to rush to Camps Aguinaldo and Crame to help protect then-General Ramos and Defense Secretary Enrile, we (as in everyone, since I'm not sure, Prince) were among the first ones to go.

During high school, we assisted children from nearby Pasay E Balow Elementary School and held annual newspaper/book/article drives to help raise funds. In college, we had fundraisers, slept in Cubao, volunteered in Pinatubo, and many more. Fueled by idealism and a lot of hormones, I really thought that those acts would help change the world.

But as I started working and my own family grew, priorities shifted. Changing the world grew wan in changing the diapers. Buying a borrowed watch a back next to paying the bills.

Each time someone would ask me to help out in one cause or another, my first instinct was to bring out my bullshit and say, "I'm not sure if I can help out. Should some money do?" I would then proceed to hand that person some money, relieved that I had somehow made a contribution. In reality, it was a cop-out.

Well, at least until Touch Ed came and rocked my world.

After "Walkin, Please" in May, Lenah Morilla went again to ask me to help participate and then-mayor Sheffil's Independence Day activities in June, and this was when I saw the energy and spirit of volunteerism in its purest form—students, artists, educators, and normal citizens (like me) working together to try to awaken the nation with a simple idea that every person in his or her own way can make this country a better place.

This idea made me realize that I need not do anything particularly different to make a difference. I could make my contribution doing what I love most: picture taking.

Snapshots of jail life

Recently, I was fortunate enough to be invited by Gang to visit the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa as part of Black Ed's "Rock The Rehas." My role was none more to help document the event as well as capture snippets of life in jail. I instantly recognized that this was a rare opportunity and jumped at the chance of going. I wanted to see the inside of Muntinlupa and knew cameras were not readily not allowed inside.

After spending a few minutes inside and conversing with some of the prison gang leaders, Gang and the team of photographers who tagged along came up with an idea that I dubbed "The Prisoners Portrait Project," where portraits of inmates would be taken with the intention of sending these to their loved ones.

Most of these guys have no way of contacting their friends and relatives, and this activity was conceived as a way to help prisoners let the outside world know that they are alive and well.

It was during these portrait sessions that I got to meet and talk to a lot of the inmates. Aside from getting their names and the current details of their loved ones, I'd normally ask them what they were in for and how it was like inside.

Though their cases and sentences varied—life imprisonment for rape, double-life for murder, 10 years for homicide—their demeanor was almost always the same: polite, with a hint of humor. I noticed that a lot of them did not smile and that most of them had a very hard time looking at the camera. I imagine that avoiding eye contact was one way of avoiding trouble inside, I guess.

To date, I have mailed out 91 portraits to places as near as 10 Homes in Paranaque (a nurse's dorm very close where I live) and as far away as Luzon. I can only imagine the reaction of the recipients of the photos.

These days, I enjoy taking pictures more, comfortable in the thought that my passion for photographs has become more than just self-expression. I now realize that my values and visual pursuits intersect, and that changing the world sometimes entails just changing a roll of film.

HAVE a stand at the Sunday Silence II event.

The sound of silence

By Greg Bailey
Contributor

LAST MONTH, 304 PEOPLE/children of the Philippines watched the ocean in silence. All of them came in shades of blue. No placards, no megaphones, no posing, no songs.

Born out of one conversation I had with veteran actor Ronnie Lazaro, this gathering came about when we started talking about politics and the emotional disconnect over here as someone's birthday party.

There were too many issues to work for, to stand against, to speak out on that the people in that party decided to hold a rally. So they sent out text messages to friends that said, "Every weekend, instead of Rock Ed at ng Bukid sa Mon. 11."

Artists, musicians, students, rock stars, photographers all showed up at the Bayanihan stretch along Roxas Blvd. Some came in groups, while many showed up alone.

Ate de Leon of Image and Media Features of Bloomberg came on their own. Character actor Tado Jimenez brought his whole family. The de Veyra brothers of Radioactive Stage Project showed up, along with Mimes de Leon. Pamanhik's lead guitarist, Howie Severino biked by because he lived on the area, and many other students came in support of something.

Some said they came to mourn the recent child-suicide in Davao, or because of the recent junkets of the former president. Others came to register their anger at the obvious corruption in government, or at least because they thought change should be happening.

We really didn't come together for any other people to see or know what we were there for. We came for ourselves. We decided that each of us has his own "movement" and we wanted to represent those before the glorious season of that particular Sunday.

We showed up so we could realize that we were not alone in this fight for real change in our country, and to attitude towards itself.

The gathering last November was really more for the people who showed up, not for the people watching. In one Sunday Silence veteran put it, "Whatever it is you think we're protesting about, you're probably right."

Join us again for Sunday Silence II on Dec. 16.

Come by yourself. See who else is staying silent but is actually aware and very involved. We have no re-affirm that our silence doesn't always mean consent. That just because we're silent doesn't mean that things are okay with us.

We are restless. We are doing all we can. Even where we are. We are still silent, but coming together somehow.

Same place, same time. Rain or shine. Wear blue.

For details on how to join Sunday Silence II, visit www.rockedphilippines.org www.bakla.org.ph or http://sunsilla.multiply.com; e-mail info@rockedphilippines.org

Join us again for Sunday Silence II

on Dec. 16. Same place, same time.

Rain or shine. Wear blue

Creating my own Butterfly Effect

By Ruby Ou Vera
Contributor

I hope the little girl I'm helping send to school now will learn to recognize good opportunities and seize those that come her way

ANY EDUCATION WE CHOOSE had to students promptly outshines when reality hits us hard outside of school.

In most cases reality comes in the form of your first minimum-wage paycheck. While some lucky ones do not pass through this phase, I once did. The ideals I had when I was a well-praised student in the university seemed so foolish when confronted with my painful 15 days' salary.

Why care about the world when more pressing matters needed my attention? Bora and Mike are here, now, while the issues linger and the news of genocide in some faraway country are too unreal for me to comprehend.

The most I've come to changing the world is exercising my right of suffrage. But then again, what's so special about that? I've not seen any change around me.

But a while, I wasn't a big fan of making a difference in the world I lived in. It's just too big a concept for one person, and I was lost as lesser, specious speck in the grand scheme of the universe. In a

A more peaceful me

By Maria A. Hartzel
Contributor

Meditation allows me to be more accepting and tolerant of situations that occur around me

THE AUTHOR (second row from bottom, sixth from left) with her meditation group in Chennai, India

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NO BEAUTY-queen illusions whatsoever, I'd also say "World peace" if asked what my greatest wish would be.

I'm not talking about the war in Iraq, the ensuing feuding among Muslims and Christians, the painful cries of starving children in some poverty-torn nation in Africa. I'm not even touching on Britney's latest debacle or another government scam. I'm just looking at a personal—humble, day-to-day existence.

This year I've experienced and seen how small moments of power can uplift my spirit and disposition, however great the crisis that's wreaking havoc on my sanity. Peace is what I experience when I meditate. In the stillness and silence I can let go, put my burdens down, rest and recharge.

It's a wonder that with the benefits of meditation as an effective stress reliever, more people don't practice it. The physical changes I've experienced during meditation, such as slowness of breath and heartbeat, bring me to a relaxed state where my worries and stresses are scrubbed away.

The act of meditating is about thinking consciously about a certain thing or thought. Meditation has been practiced in different ways for thousands of years. The spiritual aspect, such as the goal of oneness or closeness with the Divine, in religions like Buddhism and Christianity has been a fundamental reason for meditation.

Devoted practitioners usually live in seclusion away from the hustle and bustle of society. Yet today there are many methods that cater to our modern (meaning hurried and stressed) lifestyles, ensuring that almost anyone can benefit from practicing meditation.

Meditation can benefit a person both physiologically and emotionally. A one-week break lowers the levels of cortisol and lactate released by the body which causes a decrease in high blood pressure and muscle tension (not to mention those nasty headaches). It also results in an improved immune system, which in turn enables a person to be more productive in all areas of life.

Furthermore, meditation is also a mental exercise that has been known to improve concentration and focus.

The pressures of daily living can get overwhelming. Meditation is a way to relax that doesn't require any special equipment or costly medication. When I come out of meditation I feel calmer. I have a renewed sense of self, and I can see things with a clearer and more positive outlook. The longer I practice meditation, the more in touch I am with myself.

And because I am comfortable and confident with myself, I am more at ease with

Creating my ...

From page C1

hundred years, wouldn't it really matter?

What it did

Then I heard of the Butterfly Effect. It encapsulates what these theories is all about—the flutter of a butterfly's wings can cause a tornado in the opposite side of the world.

I first heard of World Vision through a friend who was sponsoring a child from Indonesia. For a very minimal amount per month, you could send a poor child to school. These children's families live daily on less than what we pay for a cup of coffee to get that "free" pleasure. I thought that it wouldn't hurt for me to sacrifice what I would pay for a dinner and a movie, so I could help a child go to school.

I chose a girl to sponsor, because in spite of all the gender-equality awareness campaigns out there, women and girls still don't get equal footing with men and boys. There is still that old and idiotic notion that girls don't have to go to school because they'll merely marry and just have to stay at home to raise their children and look after their husbands. I was determined to help reverse that view in my own small way.

Getting an education is more than just learning from textbooks and the teachers. Education is just a catalyst for learning to have your own opinions, for opening your mind to a vast world of promise and possibilities.

I hope the girl I'm helping now will have her own ideals. Whether or not those ideals will match when she gets her first paycheck is up to her.

But I want her to realize that she always has a choice to anything that happens to her. I want her to be able to intelligently decide for herself, so that whatever the consequences, she can always say that she did her best. I can only hope that whatever she learns in school, she will put to good use out of it.

I want my girl to see the world as something she has every right to belong to. By helping her finish school, a lot of opportunities will open up for her. I hope she will learn to recognize them and seize those that come her way.

The universe, after all, is made up of interconnecting specks. I'm making a difference in the life of one person in particular. The flutter of her wings may only be the beginning of a bigger change.

I was that flesh of inspiration and common sense that helped my friends learn the difference between "working to live" and "living to work."

MAKING work fun with friends

FLOWER Children Jen and me fun bonding after an office party

LASTING friendship

The sidekick

By Nadine Maturan
Correspondent

I WISH I COULD CLAIM THAT I HAVE done something more monumental or noble this year. Unfortunately, the only chairs I can make about changing the world feel to-do with my playing the role of confidante and counselor to friends after'd her their way in the corporate universe.

But I soon realized that this might not be such a small feat, after all. I've discovered that when you are a novice trying to prove your worth, the real world can often can be a battleground, and the chance of survival is greatest when you have it with a sidekick.

I was that sidekick. I was that flesh of inspiration and common sense that helped my friends learn the difference between "working to live" and "living to work."

Here was one of my best friends in my former office. I was drawn to her because she was such a contradiction: extremely well-off and yet remarkably levelheaded. She was a hard worker, giving up her every time to help others get the job done. So when it was time for her to bid her job goodbye, she felt as if something had sucked out her courage and spirit.

I am proud to be one of those people who stood by Faye during her moments of career confusion. Perhaps coffee dates, phone calls, and words of encouragement were her necessary cures for a broken heart, but if they got a smile on her face and revived as small drops that helped her get back on her feet, then they were enough.

I take pride in being able to do these little things because I've learned that kindness comes in small packages. I am even happier now because I know my kindness didn't go down the drain. Faye did get back on her feet. She is now helping in her family business and is living the life!

No choice

Having to let Faye go was hard enough for me. So when Jen, a best friend in my old job, also had thoughts of leaving, I was troubled. For a while, I felt as if I was all alone and I had no choice but to let go, because I knew that she would be better off spreading her wings somewhere else.

When Jen asked me to help her make the best decision, I did not tell her to leave or stay. I just helped her find out for herself what would make her happier. At the end of the day, that's the only thing that really mattered.

Jen is a strong, smart, and talented young woman, but even the strongest, smartest, and most talented women needs a friend in making life-altering decisions. She'd need someone to catch her when the weight of her worries becomes unbearable.

I am happy that I was that "someone" for Jen. During those unsettling and disheartening times in her life, I laughed with her and cried with her. As she held her breath, I, too, held mine. I fought for her and with her. I dreamed her dreams.

It is no easy for friends to say "I will be there if you need me," but it's a promise that's always broken, easier said than done. If I had made any significant contribution in Jen's life, it would be that I fulfilled that promise to her, and that our friendship has endured.

Jen has found a new job, and in our last conversation, she gushed, "I am SO happy in my new job! I'm really enjoying here!" I beamed, knowing that I had played a part in her happiness.

Little things

Recently, another friend of mine, Nina, was torn between two jobs. One had a warm working environment but was impractical, while the other was promising but was infested with corporate cliches.

My advice? "Choose neither." I believe one of my talents is seeing what people can do and what they can make out of their gifts. As a friend, I felt it was my responsibility to make Nina realize that she was not mediocre, and hence, she could do so much more with her greatness.

At first, my advice was a little too much for her to take, and I could not blame her. We were, after all, neophytes who only recently dipped our toes into...and are still testing—the corporate waters. We needed to live, make a name for ourselves, and yes, make money. So I understood her hesitation.

At the end, however, she told me, "You are right. Remember my job dilemma? It's neither (of) those options." She realized that she was anything but mediocre, and found a job somewhere else.

So what did I really do to change the world in 2007? I wish I could say that I had done something extraordinary: be praised on Heaven books, something worthy of the front pages of a magazine. But then again, maybe not. Rome wasn't built in a day. The world? Well, maybe it can't be changed in a year with just one giant blow. But little things like helping a friend and offering a part of oneself could be a start.

I'd like to believe that I had somehow made an impact in my friends' lives in my own little way. And if one day a few years from now, they become successful career women and great leaders, I can proudly say in those whistle look up in them, "In 2007, I changed their world. Now, it's their turn to change yours."

LIFESTYLE

Following my animal instinct

When I realized that I'd be wearing nothing but underwear for the PETA ad, I did not hesitate. If you have to strip, strip for a cause!

USA Vitamin Sale!
"My delivery anywhere in the Philippines."
eClaralishmo: 100 mg, 60caps: P2,400.
eClaralishmo: 500 mg, 100caps: P5,600.
eClaralishmo Booster: 600mg, P11.
eL-Carnitine: 500mg, 100tabs: P1,700.
eVitamin: 250mg, 100caps: P1,000.
eLdeviscentia: for arthritis, 1,500mg, P10.
www.latrina.com eat07621 eat15-1401256

By Dindan Dumpa

I BASICALLY STRIPPED. GOT MYSELF painted in stripes. And remained inside a small cage. Okay, stripe: you want more information than that.

When I found out what zoos were doing to animals, I knew I had to do something. I don't like telling people what to do, but sometimes you just have to take a stand. Animals in zoos live in bad conditions. I just wanted people to think about that.

It took no more time to come up with what I believe would be my best contribution: posing for an ad. But this was not just an ordinary ad. It's a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) ad. They're the biggest organization fighting for animal rights around the world.

They'd been sending me their magazine, Animal Times, and it got me interested in helping animals. We'd been talking for a while about different issues, and so when we met, I offered my time for their next campaign. Me, stripes? on the transcript and nodded down all the details for the shoot. When I realized that I'd be wearing nothing but underwear for the ad, I did not hesitate. If you have to strip, strip for a cause.

But it was awkward, being body-painted in a room full of people, even though I'd actually walked down a runway in just a tiny swimwear. This was somehow different. With painted stripes all over me, I had to crouch in a cage, hold several poses while the flashbulbs were off. I thought to myself, "How in the world did I end up here?"

We have to realize at some point that if you're deep at being locked in the space we perform in, natural behavior, that if it's supposed to live with other animals of its kind and you suddenly have it to live in an environment with animals that it's not supposed to be with, it's going to have some impact on the animal.

Like the zebra, the very animal I stood in pose for in the ad. Zebras are social animals. What's natural in them is that they have to be with other zebras, and in the wild, they also live with wildebeests and gazelles. At the Manila Zoo, there is only one zebra.

Unnatural environment

In school, teachers would say it's educational to go to zoos. But knowing what I know now, zoo trips are never educational. Well, I guess they do teach us that it's okay to keep animals confined and make them do as we please. But that's not what we want to teach kids. We want our kids to respect animals, not dominate them.

As long we keep these animals from doing what they are supposed to do, as long as we subject them to the unnatural environment of the zoo, we will never really see their true selves. What is educational about watching a monkey walk in circles inside its cage? What is educational about watching a zebra stand in one spot, looking sad and lonely?

Animals shouldn't be put in confinement so kids can learn about them. Watching wildlife documentaries is better, because they offer more accurate depictions of animal life.

The only thing that zoos teach young people, as some adult wishes, is that we have the power to put animals in prison and claim that it's for their own good. There's something so distorted about that.

I've been joined of a lot of the work I've done in movies. I'm happy I've gotten recognition for my work as an artist. But I think that when I get old, I'll look back on this PETA ad for its campaign against zoos, and consider it to be among the best work I've done.

If nothing else, it has gotten people thinking about other beings. I know people will have been informed about what zoos really do to animals. You can do your part, too, to save the animals. Don't go to zoos.

How far can your AIG Credit Card take you?

Treat your family to a magical moment at Enchanted Kingdom & enjoy

Php220 OFF for each Good-Any-Day Pass.

Enchanted Kingdom

Pay only Php380 (original price is Php600) for each Enchanted Kingdom Good-Any-Day Pass you purchase at Enchanted Kingdom's Makati Sales Office using your AIG Credit Card.

- Maximum of ten (10) passes can be purchased per day.
- Passes valid until December 31, 2007 only.
- Enchanted Kingdom Makati Sales Office, Ground Floor, Alfonso Condominium, 163 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.
- To inquire about the park schedule and operating hours, please call 810-7291 or 810-2116.

Promo Period: Until December 28, 2007

Call 683-8888 for details.

GUESTS dressed up on Christmas trees

For the kids—and the kid in me

By Ruth L. Navarro

TWO-YEAR-OLD JEFFERSON introduced himself to my parents by reaching for my wrist with both hands.

Hmm, the rascal that he is, teased him by hiding his hands behind his back. Jefferson responded by wiping his eyes and—from the look of the bottle—his snotty nose. He reached for him, gave him a big hug, and Jefferson stopped crying.

My mom, not wanting to miss out on the action, also reached out for him and made him sit on her lap. She became an instant fan of the boy, and she kept on demanding hugs and kisses for him from me.

It was one of the stories that I saw and heard when I celebrated my birthday at the Settlement House of Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas in Paco, Manila.

It's funny how some of my friends and family reacted when I told them I was having a party at an orphanage this year. They teased me endlessly. "Iba na 'pag nagka-edad," it all seemed.

Sometimes I laughed it off, sometimes I took the time to explain that I was actually inspired by another friend who celebrated her birthday here. I can still remember the first time I came to the House. The kids were singing songs and I found them all to be sweet-behaving and beautiful.

One kid, however, stood out from the rest. His name is Stevie and he pulled me in front when the host asked them to bring the prettiest "ate" in the room. I'm a sucker for flattery and he became my instant favorite. I promised him I'd be back.

Simple things

Initially, I thought I was going to do it alone as I prepared to advance. I bought some ingredients for the food and the two-tiers months before the actual party. But my family and friends kept pestering me about what they could bring.

I found out that orphanages needed simple day-to-day things like toiletries, powdered milk and vitamins. But they also welcome things like books, clothes and toys.

I knew my friends are fun to be with, but I never realized how big their hearts were. The amount of donations was more than what I had expected. Even people who couldn't come to the party sent stuff in instead.

The heavens head along Team donated a ton full of children's books, while Alkaline Hydrothen Inc. sent a volunteer to read a book to the kids.

But what I appreciated most was how patiently my family and friends interacted with the kids. Believe me, handling exuberant 30-year-olds and 3-year-olds is not as easy as you think. It's a risk.

They still be all over you. They will want to see your camera and your phone. They will ask their shoes to be tied. At first, you have to resist them to join the games, but after the initial shyness, they will demand to join in every time. They will also ask to be kissed and hugged every once in a while.

Before we said goodbye, the kids gave us a dance number and taught us how to do the "amazing" and "fireworks" claps. I request that my friends and I will be using those claps in our future badminton and futsal sessions.

The kids keep on saying we should come back and visit them again. Jefferson didn't want to let go of my mom. He asked her slightly and cried again.

Afterward, most of my friends said that it was a good thing we pushed through with it. Some of them voiced interests to do things like that regularly, and not just to orphanages but in other institutions as well.

Back home when we were having our family dinner, my mom couldn't stop talking about Jefferson. She was amazed that the boy she gave him wouldn't be taken away by older and bigger kids. She was worried if he was eating enough food and getting enough nutrients.

That's how I changed the world this year. And it's not about the toys and stuff that I bought for the kids or the food that we prepared.

It's about investing the people I love to the children whose lives they could shape. It's about making them care. It's about showing them an alternative way of doing something almost parents. It doesn't take a gazillion pesos. It just takes one life, one child to make our world a better place.

I celebrated my birthday this year with the orphans of the Settlement House of Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas in Paco, Manila. It was a riot.

THE AUTHOR (back row, center) with her mom and friends

ALITAPTAP Che made about a boy who helps his mom everywhere.

Faith, energy and commitment

In NY, I stopped by famous museums to educate myself further in the arts, and memorized subway connections to truly experience how to move about on my own

By Gianna Cabrera
Contributor

THE MAGNITUDE OF an individual's atomic button to society has to do with a lot of factors, and it becomes clear when one's contributions are valid and when the persons in different settings are efficient.

I was in New York from New Year to Valentine's Day this year, savoring the vibrant culture of downtown Manhattan. It was my first time to visit the Big Apple, and I was excited to be in the city I idolized for the battle world, having close friends who were successful with their careers in the business, so I attended a few Bryant Park shows and frequented Bagdag Brothers.

I stopped by famous museums to educate myself further in the arts, and memorized subway connections to truly experience how to move about on my own. To be productive, I wanted to see how things went in the United Nations' New York headquarters, so through a good recommendation I worked for the UNL department and made good friends with those who find value in ways of contributing to global well-being.

My stay ended soon enough, and come March I was back in Manila. Once again my contributions was to be a blessing to Filipinos in the predominant cities of the Big Apple, relaying such everyone there according to the Golden Rule, and seeing the world through fresh eyes acquired from my many adventures in the urban jungle.

March was dedicated to Ms. Filipina Charities Inc.'s annual beauty pageant, which I co-hosted with some celebrities.

By April it was already fashion week, and I juggled some work as a freelance writer and model. People were preparing for the national elections after the botched elections after in campaigning for pre-government parties, with my mother running as vice mayor of a rural town in Quezon for the second time.

The resistance and energy I were participating in the upsweep of Philippine politics was summed up in the month of May. I was based myself in Kuala Lumpur acting as a judge in its Miss Universe-Malaysia contest. Then I attended the Independence Day celebrations of Filipinos in Bangkok, after having my month of retail therapy.

The third quarter of the year was spent jogging more events and improving my poor fashion skills.

I believe I've changed this world in 2007 by participating in our generation's collective move toward finding appropriate character development, but also break status in finding democracy and humanity—the existence of thinking and acting like everybody else.

At the recently held Second International Congress on Life and Love which I joined, the battle cry was "Chasing" which is not narrower but a way of life through conscious choice. That's a step in breaking the increasingly persistent trend set of young people in our country.

As a former Miss Universe-Philippines (2001), I believe it is one of my duties as a good-will beauty ambassador of the Philippines to be conscious in my causes (charity) and promote the values and aspirations of the country's future movers and heroes. In 2007, I changed the world by cherishing small victories, with faith and energy.

CO-HOSTING the pageant

MEETING people from all over the world

AUTHOR (second from left) with fellow Miss Universe candidates

Feed the world with words

By Adrian M. Dy
Staff Contributor

LAST SUMMER 200 GRAINS OF RICE TO starving people in Africa in the two or so minutes I'd spent procrastinating before starting this article.

For the past two weeks, whenever I felt like it wasn't quite time yet to start working on an assignment, or when I was coming down the minutes until my podcasts had finished downloading, I'd love donating rice, usually about five or so bowlfuls, which meant that five or so people somewhere had gotten to eat a meal.

Through the magic of www.freerice.com, anyone can donate rice and at the same time improve his or her vocabulary. Does that sound like a weird combination? Perhaps, but it works and it works well, so don't knock it until you've tried it.

Basically the site's interface is like one of those videogame slash-quiz show screens. The computer will give you a word and four choices as to what that word means. (safe answer: you get carried some omission in the world 20 grains of rice. If you get it wrong, the computer tells you the right answer and adjusts the level of difficulty for you. Everybody wins!

Also on the screen is a difficulty level counter, to mark how high your vocabulary level is. The higher the number, the more difficult the words are, as all the computer-minded out there will enjoy this game as well. There are 60 levels all in all, but the FAQ tells us that it's nearly impossible to get anything higher than 48, unless you've got Dictionary.com up in another tab in your browser.

So of course, that begs the question, why shouldn't you just hunch up the pregnits to get all the right answers for you? Wouldn't that save world hunger? The answer is no.

While playing the game, a series of vocabulary banner ads runs at the bottom part of your screen. Those sponsors are the ones paying for the rice you're sending, and if everyone and their harlot cousins are running programs, the sponsors will pull the ads out. Which means no rice for hungry people.

But don't despair, there's nothing wrong with learning new words after all. The level system (incorporated in the game can also serve as a friendly bragging point for you and your friends.

Since Free Rice began last October 2007, the site has raised 4,310,000,230 grains of rice. Amazing when you consider the fact that it used to be 10 grains of rice for every correct answer!

So this Christmas break, instead of playing something like Diner Dash or Railway Wars, why not win someone some rice? You'll make Christmas a bit merrier for people out there who need it.

Through the magic of www.freerice.com, anyone can donate rice and at the same time improve his or her vocabulary

How far can your AIG Credit Card take you?
Celebrate the holidays and enjoy special treats when you use your AIG Credit Card.
FREE Burgoo Kebabs
FREE Grilled Chicken Limone
FREE Sisig
FREE Leche Flan
FREE Rocky Road or Cookies & Cream or Mango Caramel Ice Cream
It's gotta be Shakey's
FREE Pizza
Upon purchase of either Large or Party Thin or Thick Crust Pizza and a Pitcher of Iced Tea or Lemonade
Call 683-8888 for details.
PIXMA
Canon
Canon ImageNation
HOLIDAY!
MERRY MERRY ANG PASKO, MANY MANY GIFTS
PARA SA'YO SA WESTERN UNION GOLD CARD!
Get freebies and discounts, pag present pa lang at each transaction sa Western Union Gold Card.
May 2 ways to get more gifts from your Western Union Gold Card!
WESTERN UNION
Call 888-1200 for more details.
Kodak

Hands, not alms

By Kate Alcuaz
24/7 Contributor

I DON'T GIVE ALMS TO THE poor anymore. I don't give my spare change to street kids begging my shirt for money, other parts of being to the real world. I finally understood when my university professors and theology classmates told me: "You are not helping the poor by giving them your spare change."

If you give P5 a day to every street kid you encounter after school or work, you won't alleviate their poverty. You are spoiling them by keeping them in the streets. Adult beggars will refuse to find a job, because begging in the streets actually earns more than our country's minimum wage. Poor children will no longer go to school because their poverty are using them as moneymakers.

Giving spare change to the poor is an easy way out for my social conscience. He are a starving person in the street. He feel guilty. We grab a few coins from our pocket and hand it to him. We get to receive gratitude, too. We get to watch our humanism lifestyles and buy a grande mocha at Starbucks.

But really now, did we change the world? Did we make any significant improvement in the poor person's life? No. Not even if we give the kid P100. Not even if we give the kid P500. Not even if we give the kid half a sandwich. Not even if we celebrate our 18th birthday at a charity ward.

We spend so much time too, interested in the weekday world that we think we are doing our duty to help our less fortunate brothers by giving them our spare change or even sacrificing. Some people spend their birthday at a charity ward, spending thousands of pesos on gifts and food, and then go home with a relieved conscience.

No! But what? How many of us have actually gone back to that charity institution we outpoured a few years back?

I raise my hand.

Supporting charities is more than just a one-time deal. It's more than just dole-outs. It's about sitting down with people and finding ways to make an impact in their lives. It's about reaching past kids how to read instead of giving them coins on the street. It's about spending time with abandoned aging people instead of just dropping off a pack of canned goods in their huts.

It's a commitment that only a few people are willing to take. This year I've decided to take the first step: finding an institution that I can give my long-term devotion to.

Charity event

I was invited by C2 Life to spend a day at Kamlungan Ni Maria, a home for the aged in Malolos, and participate in my body-mind-soul activities. C2 Life spent nearly half the year organizing physical activities such as yoga and cultural activities such as walking tours. To cap off a successful year, they invited C2 Life members like myself to their charity activities.

Just when I thought I was to for another one-time charity project, I met a group of volunteers committed to making a difference in people's lives: Hands On Manila. This non-profit organization mobilizes corporate volunteers such for their partner charities and organizations. Kamlungan ni Maria is just one of the many that Hands On Manila supports.

As I signed my name on their members' list and received my "Hands On" passport, I knew This is this for the long run.

Oldies but groovies

At Kamlungan ni Maria, each volunteer had to pick a lola or lolo. The groovy lolos were the popular choices. Lola Linda in her bright red dress, sparkling bangles and pink earlie shades was an instant hit. Lola Pina, who talked about her beauty pageant award, was a friendly Divine.

As each of the elderly found his or her volunteer partner, I spotted Lola Belen, with her shoulders hunched as she sat quietly in the second row third of Sharon Valiente and I were assigned to her, and it was an easy task. She barely met our eyes as we talked to her.

Minutes after trying to strike a conversation with the timid old lady, a social worker went up to us and said, "Oh sorry she's the most quiet person in Kamlungan. She rarely talks to anyone. Would you like to appoint you up with another one?"

I looked around at the happy volunteers, laughing along with their lolos and lolas who eagerly participated in the program. "No, I think I'll stay with Lola Belen," I said.

The social worker told me that she rarely spoke in third. Unless to say other rarely talked to anyone. Ringo! I said to myself. I struggled to remember all the native terms my Batchaw grandparents had taught me.

Lola Belen would nod or shake her head once in a while and never speak words that I couldn't make sense of. Sharon tried her best to make her laugh, but lola would barely converse with us. There we found her weakness.

"Would you like me to apply some makeup on you?" Sharon asked in Tagalog as she whipped out her makeup kit. Lola Belen broke into a cranky grin. We, we finally made progress!

In between brushing her cheeks and lids with pink makeup, Lola Belen mould flash her wedding ring as if to say that I wouldn't tell if she was making fun of us or if she was enjoying her makeover.

Other volunteers had it easy. They got the elders to dance and sing to the tunes of Alex Ferguson, who also joined the event. Other elders openly shared their stories and personal photos. Meanwhile, Sharon and I could barely get Lola Belen to answer our questions. She only got her to laugh when Alex went up to her and others the usual workers complimented her makeup.

I never left her side, not even if she gave me a disturbed look whenever I put my arms around her. I kept telling her stories of my grandparents from Bicol. I told her that she and my lola have the same name. She looked up when I told her that I loved my lola's lung: She nodded when I asked if she, too, cooked delicious lung. At the end of the Christmas party I allowed Lola Belen back to the ward.

"Goodbye, Lola, I'm leaving now," I said in my shaky Bicol. Then, for the first time she looked me straight in the eye with a piercing look and nodded. I closed the door and left, wondering why grownups would leave their old parents in places like Kamlungan to fade away into oblivion, while getting occasional entertainments from celebrities, social workers and volunteers whose names they would probably never remember.

Kamlungan ni Maria is located at 37 Liberato St., Mojong Bangan Subd., Antipolo City.

Visit www.handsonmanila.org or call 8933237 and e-mail to info@handsonmanila.org.

Supporting charities is more than just a one-time deal. It's more than just dole-outs.

THE DUDES but groovies take a class photo.

SHARON Valiente with one of Kamlungan's elderly

I've joined the nationwide bandwagon by bringing myself closer to having an R.N. affixed to my name

WITH classmates from nursing school

A step out of the ordinary

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
24/7 Correspondent

WE USUALLY EQUATE "changing the world" with an effort so gargantuan that it involves millions of people benefiting from something like a miracle cure or a shift in nations' leadership. We individuals like me, however, a world-change can also mean just as an attempt at thinking the ordinary after all, our "world" is the environment we live in.

This year, I made my attempt by taking another degree, taking up a 4-1/2 in which I had been to go to where I could finish this degree, and having the courage to get out of my comfort zone to make friends with people whose orientations were the opposite of mine.

I've joined the nationwide bandwagon by bringing myself closer to having an R.N. affixed to my name.

The reasons

I can't really say I took up Nursing because I am a natural-le caring person and would like to be of service. Ha ha!, whoever or people ask me why I'm willing to go through all the required community service, hospital duties, and face endless lectures and exams all over again, I find myself at a loss for answers.

Money is one. A chance to travel is another. An open door to a new adventure somewhere. But, mostly, it's really just to be exposed to something new, especially new people.

I got what I wished for and more. I didn't just meet interesting individuals. I've actually become friends with them.

The truth is, I was homebound (by choice) for most of 2007 and had been practically glued to the Internet from sunup to sundown. I chopped her everything from clothes, to shoes, to lip balm online. And whenever I was away from the house for more than two hours, I started to feel uncomfortable and vulnerable.

So, when I was encouraged to take up a Nursing course as a step into bonds away from mine, I was terrified. I didn't mind the long classes...I'm used to seeing zero buildings and a thickness of trees, but I feared interacting with other people in the flesh.

The first day of class felt like 1st Encounter my rash-back to nanochan-cauterbox [and I hadn't been to school for about five years!].

The high schoolish aura of it all made me feel a little inferior, especially since we were all pre-freshmen who have each other memorized in finals is enough in, at least, keep us out of removal exams and zooming through smoothly from one semester to the next. The drive to overcome the original challenge I faced of going back to school has been fortified by a support system that is now palpitated and true to help it.

All of a sudden, the effort to satisfy change the world I live in has been replaced by trust of that that consists of family friends and most of friends.

There is no doubt that the course can only get harder and more demanding as I near graduation, but with sustained motivation, I don't IT get as excited with getting a new online message in the next three years.

E-mail the author at vane_doctor@yahoo.com

A lean, mean multitasking machine

By Bianca Conradi
24/7 Correspondent

THERE ARE PHONES THAT are designed to look sleek and classy, and there are phones that are made to withstand the most abusive cell-phone users—the ones who frequently drop their units to the floor, talk until the wee hours of the morning, and wear out the keypads with strenuous texting.

The Sony Ericsson W910i is a phone that can withstand the most manic cell-phone users and more breaking out a sweat...figuratively, of course. The latest to Sony Ericsson's Walkman phone line, the W910i is equipped with all the kinds needed for listening to music, playing video games and surfing the Internet.

While most phones are capable of playing hours of music, what sets the W910i WalkMan phone apart from the others is its Media Control feature, which allows users to change tracks by simply shaking the cell phone—almost as if it's a pinball machine.

Skip one song forward by flicking the phone to the right, or take a step backward by shaking it to the left. Want to shuffle your playlist? Shake your phone back and forth for a crazy take on a mixed playlist. You can also use the same shuffling motion to play the games available on your phone, should you tire of pressing buttons just to make your move.

Another new feature on the W910i is Sensible, which allows for searching your music collection and creating playlists based on tempo and style as opposed to searching for songs based on artists and albums. So if you're looking for chamber jazz or chillout music, all you have to do is go by the phone's dot matrix system in order to rank the kind of music you're in the mood for.

It sounds much more complicated than it really is, but the SensMe system really does make searching for genres and get the songs that have similar dot matrix patterns, the W910i selects songs that you might be in the mood for rather all, you don't want to spend too much time creating playlists on your computer).

The phone also has an instant-messenger mode for users, which lets you access your music, videos, podcasts and photos from a single icon on the phone menu. The Media Manager PC program allows easy access to your files through your computer, so you can search and select music, videos and photos to transfer to your phone with a simple drag-and-drop of the cell phone—almost as if it's a pinball machine.

While the W910i won't beat a separate mp3 player, you've got more than enough music to get you going for the whole day, as it has room for over 900 songs (with a 1GB memory stick). So if you're not planning a directional cross-Canada-or-bust, the Walkman phone should be more than adequate.

As with all Sony Ericsson phones, the battery life of the phone is excellent, lasting up to three days without charging (even if you're a heavy cell phone user). The W910i is also equipped with a 2-megapixel camera, so if you accidentally leave your camera at home or just want to take goofy photos with your friends, this phone's got you covered.

For short multitasking person, the W910i is the smart-haired phone to beat this holiday season.

E-mail the author at bianca.conradi@yahoo.com

W910i Walkman phone

FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS, WE'VE BEEN GETTING bombarded by e-mails from readers who've written us their favorite celebratory and get-ready-for-a-date songs. However, it was the entries from Monique Ibe C. Santos and Jonathan Paul Lacsamana that really got our attention. Monique will soon be enjoying music from her W220i, while Jonathan Paul will get ready for his date with the help of the W200i. Get €330491 and look for Marta to claim your prize.

This week, we want to know: What music are playing on your cellphones and why you think the tracks fit passing this list could be the best way of starting? What was playing when you got together or broke up and eventually made out?

Give us the best of your music memories in the weekly questions and write a brief one. Sony Ericsson Walkman phones! E-mail your answer to concerts.scout@gmail.com. Include your name, age and contact information plus the song title, artist and music genre. Deadline for this answer is Dec. 14. A unique and funny answer will get you the Sony Ericsson W910i Walkman phone.

LIFESTYLE

Did you know that only one to three percent of baby turtles reach maturity?

So long, 'pagong'!

Text and photos by Nilita Maris Pil. Sablan
INQ7.net correspondent

WHEN ASKED TO WRITE in how I changed the world this past year, it took me forever to come up with something.

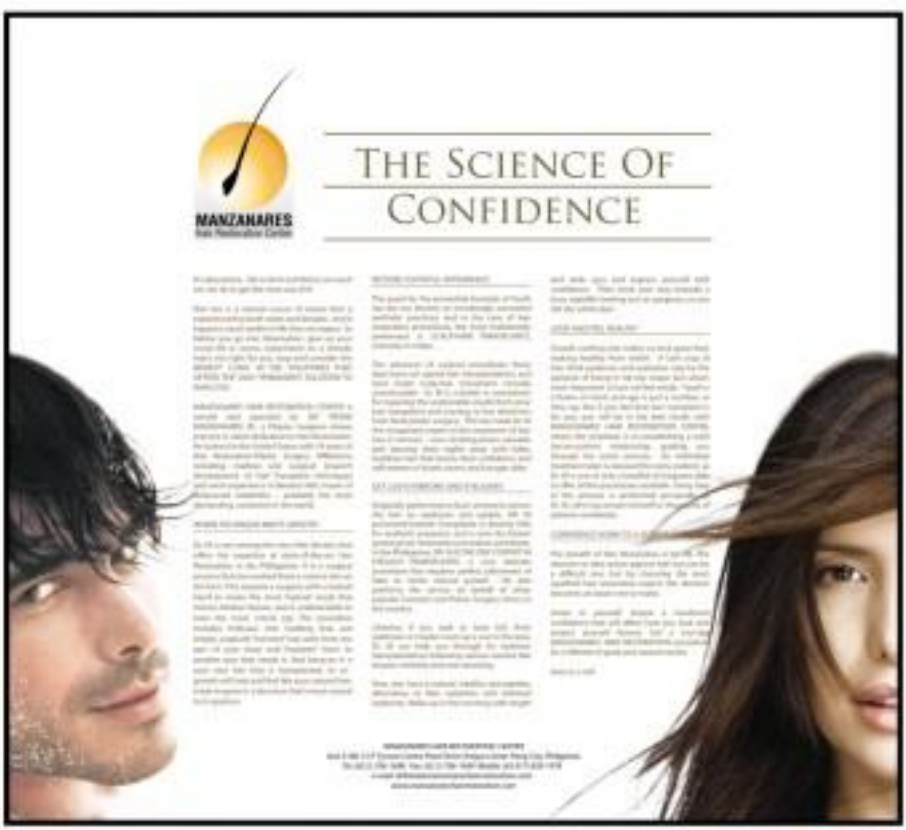
Sure, I did my share of everyday good deeds—like helping random strangers or giving extra coins or restaurant leftovers (biggie bags to street people. But the more I thought of something universally world-altering that I personally set out to do, the more time it took me to realize that there was really no particular cause I actively supported this year.

So I got out of my shell and looked for a particular cause to be involved with. After all, the year hasn't ended yet, and I could still contribute something positive to the world.

I ended up attending the Pandayan festival last Nov. 28-30 in Marcing, Bataan. Now in its third year, the festival continues to generate awareness and gather funds for Bataan conservation.

Birdhouse or bamboo birdfeeder—all native species in the world—are now highly cherished...

SEE LIVING 12



A diary in comics by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LINH

PUGAD BABOY

GARFIELD

BABY BLUES

ZITS AND WISSY

LOVEBONDS

BIKE MACHINE

BEN

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku

By Elmo Elmo

				4				
	7		2		1			
	3	2				1		
	4						7	
3								2
7	2					5	9	3
	8		3	1			5	
	1		6	9			2	
	5	9	7	8	4	3	6	

Difficulty Level: ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and progress at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	5	7	6	4	3	9	8
4	8	6	3	1	9	2	7	5
3	9	7	2	8	5	1	4	6
8	7	3	5	4	1	6	2	9
6	1	2	9	3	8	4	5	7
5	4	9	6	2	7	8	3	1
2	5	8	4	9	6	7	1	3
7	6	4	1	5	3	9	8	2
9	3	1	8	7	2	5	6	4

Concepts Puzzles, Box, Co Pte) Limited, Singapore. Distributed by

So long, 'pagong'!

From page E1

mind with extinction because of human activities such as poaching, egg gathering, dangerous fishing and pollution. In fact, many adult female turtles are hunted and killed on beaches during nesting season.

While their meat serves as food for poor communities, their shells and skin are used for several illegal by-products such as combs, guitars and accessories.

Marine turtle eggs, on the other hand, are gathered and sold in the black market where they command high prices because of their perceived aphrodisiac effects.

The entire Sugar and Morong coasts in Bataan are popular nesting grounds of three out of five in the species present in the country: the Hawksbill, Olive Ridley and the Green Turtles.

To save these species, the Bataan community organization named Bantay Pawikan, Inc. which has been doing conservation work since 1995, with the help of the United Nations Development Country Programme and the provincial government.

Surviving turtles carry provided Morong residents in meager incomes that sent their kids to school and allowed them to buy

STUDENTS from Morong, Bataan pose a marine turtle hatchling at the Pawikan Conservation Center.

food and pay debts—while inflicting damage to marine biodiversity, of course.

This led to a decrease in turtle nesters and a shorter nesting season. However, the endangered marine turtles have gotten a reprieve, thanks to the organization's conservation efforts and efforts to emphasize the importance of community participation in the program. The community-based project has also set up livelihood projects for the now reformed poachers.

During the festival, I joined government officials and other members of the media in releasing newborn hatchlings to the ocean. From a box brimming with adorable gray turtles, I selected a random hatchling, named him Donatello (my favorite character in the TV series "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" when I was a kid) and carefully placed him up.

I had to fix some goofs in handling hatchlings because if he fell off, he would have broken a bone and might not make it out there on his natural habitat.

After some extremely nervous shots with my shown handling, I released Donatello and let him wade into the salt water to join Leonardo, Raphael, Michaelangelo, Ariel, Flounder and the rest of his marine world.

The act of releasing a tiny turtle into the ocean may not seem the most impressive world-altering effort, but in a world where animal extinction is a reality, that little effort is well worth it. Did you know that only one in three percent of baby turtles reach maturity? I hope my Donatello makes it.

E-mail the author at mimi.markudsen@yahoo.com

I am not a plastic bag

By Kimee Rodrigo
2007 Contributor

THANKS TO AL GORE, EVERYbody's going green. I personally "have not been "An Inconvenient Truth" but I don't think it's a passing fad so start thinking of the environment, of your future. I also don't think we should all start living like hippies and stop shaving our armpits and legs.

There are lots of ways one can go green. Printing on both sides of the paper, for example. Turning off the faucet while brushing one's teeth. Turning off the light when going out of the room.

But I choose to battle against the ubiquitous plastic bag.

An article I read early this year changed the way I look at something we take for granted all the time—plastic. Did you know that less than 1 percent of plastic bags are recycled? And that every single plastic bag manufactured still exists and hasn't even started degrading yet? Can you imagine how many plastic bags that amounts to?

The bottom quotes could be extract before everything plastic is erased off the planet. Plastic will outlive us all?

For the longest time, I've always had a lightweight tote bag stashed in my purse, and I use it to carry stuff bought when shopping. Only then your didn't use it extensively, using plastic bags overnight with each purchase, especially from convenience stores and fast food restaurants. Those establishments are notorious for placing each item in a plastic bag.

I still get weird looks when I hand over my canvas tote, but I don't mind. I can only hope it won't be long before they start asking customers first before bagging purchases.—"Ma'am, ga plastic

'Bag sa pet'

I'm wearing shoes line you call me a hypocrite. I still drink (coke to cure, not the occasional fast food (don't even get me started on styrofoam!), still use paper towels. When shopping for groceries, I still use plastic bags, but I make sure they get reused as lining for the garbage bin. The least I can say is that now I'm aware how much waste I generate from day to day and try to make it as much as I can.

That's the bottom line we need to be conscious of: what we throw away and what gets reused and recycled.

This Christmas, I plan to give out lightweight tote bags as gifts, accompanied by a plea to refuse plastic bags when shopping. I think that's a sizable request. Much more preferable to asking them not to chew armpits and legs, anyway.

Visa gives cardholders a chance to win trips for two to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

All it takes to qualify for the weekly draw is to spend with your Visa card!

PHILIPPINES, 27 November 2007 - From now until 15 January 2008, any one who spends at least PHP 1,000 in a single transaction on their Philippine-issued Visa Debit, Prepaid and Credit card will stand a chance to win a trip for two to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Ten packages for two people each will be given away in Visa's "Beijing 2008 Olympics Visa Promotion". Limited-edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia will also be given out during the promotion.

Cardholders simply need to submit their personal cardholders and transaction information online or through SMS to register for the promotion. Those who choose to register online can do so over **Verisign's newly created Visa Olympics marketing website - www.visaasiapacific.com** - and access the "Philippines" page and click on the "current promotions" link to access the registration page.

"Millions of people around the world are looking forward to what is arguably the world's number one sporting event and we believe that as a worldwide Olympics sponsor since 1986, and through this promotion, Visa is in a special position to make it easier for its cardholders in the Philippines to stand a chance at experiencing the Olympic Games and to show their support for their athletes in person," Visa International Country Manager for the Philippines, Rob Joubert, said.

Limited-edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia and one package to the Games will be given away during every week between 28 November 2007 and 24 January 2008. Ten packages to the Games will be given out during the last two weekly draws.

Each package will be for two people and will consist of round-trip airline tickets, hotel accommodation, hotel transfers and passes to two events at the Games. Winners of the packages will also receive special Visa Olympic Games merchandise.

Winners will be notified via registered mail sent through various channels in major daily newspapers. Each cardholder can only win once and if their name is drawn more than once, they will be awarded the package to the Olympic Games.

The Philippines is one of several markets across Asia Pacific to launch this promotion which is part of Visa's regional Olympics marketing campaign.

About Visa: Visa operates the world's largest retail electronic payments network providing processing services and payment product platforms. This includes consumer credit, debit, prepaid and commercial payments, which are offered under the Visa, Visa Electron, Interlink and PLUS brands. Visa enjoys unsurpassed acceptance around the world and VisaPLUS is one of the world's largest global ATM networks, offering cash access in local currency in more than 170 countries.

For further information, please contact:
Emily Dy / Mari Rigor
emily@ubcm.com.ph
mari@ubcm.com.ph
(632)892 [illegible] / 127 / loc. 128

LG Electronics

BLOCKBUSTER SOUND

Crisp, clean and powerful theater sound in the comfort of your home.

P 18,999 only!

HOME THEATER SYSTEM HT-963B

Great Sound, Great Price Offer!

P 5,999 only!

FB162
- Dolby Digital
- DivX
- USB Play
- 4 Movie Equalizer
- Karaoke Function
- 1,000 PMPO

P 7,999 only!

MDX62
- Dolby Digital
- DivX
- USB Play
- 4 Movie Equalizer
- Karaoke Function
- 1,200 PMPO

LG

Life's Good

LG Electronics Philippines
117, Legaspi St., Mandaluyong Pasig City • Tele. (63-2) 4151 to 61 • Fax (63-2) 662-2417, 6662 • Toll Free No. 1-800-10-4422220 (Free provincial calls) • CIC Hotline (02) 645-2323, (63-2) 4242323, (632) 6622323
www.lge.com

BDO
Wealth Management
"Money was never a big motivation for me, except as a way to keep score. The real excitement is playing the game."
Donald Trump, Jr.

Be a part of the 2bU! Christmas Scrapbook

Everyone has Christmas memories. We want to help share yours. Do you have Christmas stories, photos, articles, essays, poems, songs, scrapbook pages, journal entries, blog posts, old cards, letters and artworks that you want to be published in our pages? E-mail them to us at christmasscrapbook2007@gmail.com. Don't forget to add your name, age, school/office and contact info. The best contributions will be included in next week's 2bU!

A million stars inspire a million acts of kindness

For countless years now, the Makati-going public has looked forward to the Ayala Avenue Christmas decor. An annual effort of Ayala Land and with changing themes each time, it lights up the Makati Central Business District (MCBD) like a bright beacon of awareness. For a time, it was about competing for attention in terms of color and creativity when it comes to celebrity scenes. Then it was about a new wave of lanterns adorning the streetlamps and fresh lights dotting the trees and centre islands.

This year, the MCBD is blanketing a different light now that is full of joy and hope. More than just about lighting up the city, this year's decor of a million miniature versions of the traditional white parol is all about inspiring acts of kindness befitting the season of giving.

Ayala Land's Miriam Rafeloski, head of Signature Projects-Strategic Landbank Management Group which is responsible for such developments as Ayala Center, Bonifacio Global City, and Fiorenti, posed a challenge that has never been done in the past for her team to execute a Christmas effort that was about giving back to the community to spur a more lighting aesthetic and instead, living this up as a full corporate effort across Ayala Land and all its subsidiaries, with the support of other corporate partners.

Now, there are a million white stars blanketing the main thoroughfares of the MCBD along the stretch of Ayala Avenue from EDSA to Buendia, Makati Avenue to Ayala Avenue—all of which represent hope, joy, love, optimism, and the real meaning of Christmas.

Dubbed "A Million Christmas Stars," the little stars are meant to bring hope and light to this Christmas season for the underprivileged children supported by NGOs the Kalaallad Buhay Foundation and Unang Hakbang Foundation, which were chosen as the beneficiaries of Ayala Land's Christmas project. Both organizations are engaged in helping street children and those living in poor urban communities through various programs in education and child welfare and support's mission which is consistent with Ayala Land's vision to enrich lives through a lasting commitment to nation building by promoting the betterment of the Filipino.

Kalaallad Buhay Foundation, headed by former Makati Mayor Ora. Elenita Olivas, is an organization that provides various support activities to street children, orphans, and the needy. Likewise, Unang Hakbang Foundation has a noteworthy effort to protect and provide for the needs of underprivileged children, specifically in the areas of rebuilding the children's self-esteem, improving their skills and assisting families in taking care of their children.

"The decor now has a deeper meaning and purpose befitting the season of Christmas, and it is one that every Makati resident or office worker can support and be proud of," shares Joel Luna, chief architect of Ayala Land and a member of the team that designed the decors. "During this Christmas season, everyone who will see the huge number of stars lining the streets will be struck not just by the decors but also by the numerous acts of kindness that made the decors possible."

Through these Christmas stars, ALI instigated a fundraiser to consolidate corporate contribution within the mother company and its subsidiaries. ALI made a conscious effort to consolidate its annual corporate gift list to maximize proceeds for the two NGOs. It originally Christmas card that features the street children of Makati for its cover design was also created. The children were photographed one Sunday morning along Ayala Avenue and around the Tower One and Exchange Plaza Building. Thus far, thousands of cards have been ordered by both corporate and individual sponsors. Proceeds from the sales of these cards were turned over to KBF and Unang Hakbang last November 5 during the simple lighting ceremonies held at the Tower One fountain area.

Both those efforts have inspired the Ayala Land management and staff to go beyond the glitter of Christmas and bring back the sparkle in the eyes of disadvantaged youth and adults. Companies such as Globe, Philippine Star, Jollibee and McCann Worldwide Group have seen the value of the project and also gave their valuable support. "We hope that the intent of integrating the spirit of giving with the décor would become a Christmas tradition for the Makati CBD," remarks Luna.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lizle Loriza G. Velarde

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Milcu
Puff out that odor spot away!
POWDERED DEODORANT
Available at all mercury drug stores
MAGIC PUFF

VH1 PLAYS the college rock hard.

Vertical Horizon charms local youth

... as new Rivermaya presents a different act

By Pockets Concepcion
Photos courtesy of MTV Philippines

FOR ANYONE WITH NO IDEA WHAT VERtical Horizon is, the band's recent MTV Philippines concert at the Araneta Coliseum was a good introduction.

Led by charismatic shirtless frontman Matthew Scannell, VH1 played a steady mid-tempo set of originals that sounded like college rock. Imagine REM's laid-back material but with Michael Stipe's pronounced articulation clearly.

VH1's songs are mostly about relationships, some of which ("Where You Go," "I'm Still Here") throbbed with pain and sadness—except that they ended on a note of optimism.

Positive attitude

VH1 owes life's despair and desolation with a positive attitude. This became apparent as the next several songs came on, such as "Send Her Her Stuff" ("Not it's not so bad...") and "Send It Up" ("It's all right, by the way...").

In most famous comparisons, "Everything You Want" was not exactly about a happy situation, but sounded like the speaker was bent on retaining his romantic pursuit.

Described as alternative rock, VH1's guitar-driven music moved placidly on a steady rhythm. The band played with hardly any rough edges.

JAMIE ROWNEY

Lead vocalist Scannell changed guitars after every few songs and sang in a rich, warm tone. Audience response bordered on adulation. We were at our wits' end, wondering how the band could achieve such positivity with pessimistic lyrics. Perhaps, upon reflection, we noticed that its fans were

TURN TO 14

RIVERMAYA'S new frontman Jason Fernandez

Nokia N81 8GB
+
3 FREE music videos
NOKIA
Nseries
5 FREE songs of your choice
1 FREE N-Gage game
= Entertainment to the max
Enjoy full-length tracks, watch short music videos, and play exciting N-Gage™ games* for FREE. Experience the next episode in entertainment with these premium features bundled with the Nokia N81 8GB.
www.nokia.com.ph/n-series
Entertainment. The next episode.

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS - THE
2 HOOD of HORROR
3 CATACOMBS
4 BATANES
5 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
6 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
7 ENCHANTED
8 Indie5ive: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
9 HITMAN
10 BEOWULF

ERMITA

1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
2 Indie5ive: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
3 BEOWULF
4 CATACOMBS
5 PASUKUBI
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
7 HITMAN
8 BATANES
9 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
10 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

METRO EAST

1 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 CATACOMBS
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
5 EASTERN PROMISES
6 HITMAN
7 HOOD of HORROR
8 BATANES

NOVALICHES

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HOOD of HORROR
3 BATANES
4 PASUKUBI

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4 PASUKUBI

STA. ROSA

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

LIPA

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 THE NANNY DIARIES

DASMARINAS

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GHOST SON
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

IMUS

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GHOST SON
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

ANGELES

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE KINGDOM

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 ENCHANTED

STARMILLS

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE KINGDOM
5 BOOGEYMAN 2
6 BATANES

BACOLOD

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
4 THE KINGDOM
5 BENEDICTION
6 Indie5ive: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS

ILOILO

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 FRED CLAUS
4 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
5 BOOGEYMAN 2
6 GAME PLAN

ROUNDUP

DIRECTOR Ang Lee, center, is flanked by actress Tang Wei and actor-singer Wang Leehom. AFP/EPA

7 wins for 'Lust, Caution'

TAIPEI, Taiwan—Taiwan-born Hollywood native son Ang Lee with honors Saturday as his spy thriller "Lust, Caution" dominated the Golden Horse awards in Taipei, clinching seven prizes, including Best Film, Director and Actor.

Lee used the occasion to speak out about the plight of his home island in unusually political comments.

In accepting the award for Taiwanese Filmmaker of the Year, the Oscar-winning director said, "I feel very warm in the heart as overseas foreigners's affirmation." AP

GMA bags CMMA honors

GMA Network bagged six awards and a citation in the recently held 29th Catholic Mass Media Awards.

Among the programs included in the winners' circle are "Tri Gma," Best News Program; "Philippine Agenda" for Best Talk Educational Program; "Wish Ko Lang," Best Public Service Program; and "Kapuso Mo Jessica Soho," which shared the spotlight with ABS-CBN's "The Correspondents" in the Best Magazine Program category.

"Mga Kwento ni Lola Basyang" and "Maggikwentuhan" bested the other entries for the Best Children's Program and Best Drama Program trophy.

The network was also given the special citation for Best Public Service Achievement via its election advocacy campaign, "Sa Isa Kong Boto."

Film fest promo

Patrons of the Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines (MMFFP) will get the chance to win up to P100,000 in the "Cash na Pelikan" raffle promo.

Participants must have at least watched five movies to complete a valid entry to the grand draw set on Jan. 19 at the Mall of Asia Music Hall.

Entries may be submitted at drop boxes located at participating theaters.

Vertical . . .

From page F1

mostly from the MTV-headed 1980s generation.

Sachin, Shwetangini presented an entirely new set, with guitarist Mike Elgar, bassist Jojo Sergio and drummer Mark Escueta doing loud vocals on some songs.

Next came singer Jayson Fernandez handled the premises very well, and the good thing was he didn't try to sound like Stallone or Bon Bon Jovi.

Standing center, Jamie Kennedy impressed us when he, well, as the one about celebrities the country has plenty of—typhoons, earthquakes and "tsunamis."

ENTERTAINMENT

Pynocare
"PEKAS" FACTS
Just 2 capsules a day for at least 8 weeks and its PEKAS-FREE

OPENING TODAY

Elizabeth: The Golden Age
Starring: Cate Blanchett, Clive Owen, Geoffrey Rush, Samantha Morton

Directed by Shekhar Kapur
This sequel to the 1998 epic drama 'Elizabeth' finds the Virgin Queen (Blanchett) battling with the Spanish Armada and le-

OPENING W/

'Marimar' wows Pinoys in the US

(SENSUOUS DAMTER STILL HAS A HAND) over from their successful 'Marimar' US visit. "It's funny and amazing that Pinoys in America seem to be more into our telenovelas than people back here," he notes. "They

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

is settled from different cities just to see it."

Craig's supporters will surely come in full force again when he holds a thanksgiving party at his and GF Kamille's Conversage, a coffee shop (sans GF's, for still he giving away 1 million worth of prizes.

Ordonanas lucia an now singing, Ding Dong, Ding Dong, heralding his grocery

Marimar's jewels

Marian Rivera aka Marimar deserves nothing less than top-of-the-line jewelry to wear on her top-tanning-talent-ya. That's why on her supposed wedding day to Rodolfo Van Jose Marvin Agustin, Marimar was wearing Mikaday Jewels' "Tropical Basic." "The particular piece of 20 South Sea pearls, multi-color diamonds with 18-K white gold chains bundled together was first prize in the bridal category at the pinoyginus. Philippine Fine Jewelry Design Competition in 2006," says Ormarian Bautista, Mikaday VP for marketing. Even Cristine (Dantelinska Salcedo) and Jaygee (Dingdong Dantzler) Ian Mingo Gum, the model-married jewelry store.

The two big "sPG" go together well. Marimar and Mikaday... Hmmm! Yin and yan' needs candy

Birthday concert

Being a longtime friend of Pops Fernandez, I couldn't help but get emotional when she cried during her silver anniversary concert at the Big Dome. While her glam shots were being flashed on the video screens, memories of all we've been through together came rushing back.

The most touching part was when she sang her signature song, "Dito." Before singing it, she said, "This song is for a very special man who I wish were here. If he could see me now, I hope he'll be proud of me." For a while everyone thought she was referring to Martin Nievera and pics of her late dad (Eddie Fernandez) were shown.

Despite the 10 Pops duo with Martin, she still acknowledged the big role he played in her career and her life. The song some love songs featuring "Residente Lito" duets.

It was so endearing when she said, "Those songs which Martin and I used to share with, [words] cannot express [how] to say no. [Someone is] so long as [with] I only gave to show that she's not here anymore [because] her [emotion] continued. There's a voice that reminds] very much like Martin's suddenly sang along with her. "Mahalaga [ang] ako," she remarked in jest. "Ako din eh [laughs]."

It turned out to be her back-up singer. If you can now look back and look forward with

YOUNGER/ G2

Use your Visa card to win 10 trips for 2 to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Simply register a minimum P1,000 single receipt Visa purchase for a chance to win two roundtrip air tickets, Olympic Games tickets, hotel accommodation and transfers for a 10/29 stay in Beijing. You can also win limited edition Visa Olympic Games Memorabilia. For details, text VISA to 505 for Smart and Talk 'N' Text, 2345 for Globe and TM, or log on to www.visaapppartners.com

Beijing 2008
VISA
WORLDWIDE PARTNER

Bollywood exec: I definitely want to shoot here

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—EVEN AS its entertainment division Philippines Inc. signed eight Bollywood filmmakers and producers in Clark on Sunday to promote the economic zone and its main owner, the Subic Bay Freeport, as movie locations or production headquarters.

Philippine Ambassador to India Alberto Encarnacion, who accompanied the group, said this was the first batch of foreign film industry leaders to come and check out the Philippines.

"There's a second Bollywood group that's coming in January (by April, we will have the Hollywood group," Encarnacion said of the business.

Those who attended a briefing were representatives of the Bollywood films Maverick Productions, Johny Brothers Entertainment Co., Popcorn Motion Pictures and Compressor Films, as well as Indian tourism and housing security officials.

Encarnacion said the renewed interest in the Philippines as a "filmmaker's haven" was a result of President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to India.

"The California State is the 10th top economy in the world and the entertainment industry contributes largely to that. Pwedeng dyosa naman Pilipinas to be part of that industry," she said.

Ashish Saraswati, Bollywood Babes Brothers said the company was "exploring, but I definitely want to shoot in your country."

"There's a wide breadth of location. Those add up to production value," Compressor Film's Suman Palg said.

Hindi setting

In her presentation, Collenies May Jimenez, PhP1-mln visa exemption and dual operations office, said that in past years, several Hollywood outfits had used the Philippines for movie settings.

But "converting entertainment is new in the Philippines" through films made, she said.

The joint venture of Mira International Pictures, Philippine Films and Studios International Corp. is developing Clark and Subic to be Asia's first entertainment production enclave with strategic footprint investment to make it the "Hollywood of Asia."

The country's major conversion into its most competitive production zone, one and versatile shooting locations, abundant local talents and entertainment craftsmen, hospitable English-speaking population, multi-industry support facilities and nearness to other places in the Asia Pacific region.

Doing business in Clark and Subic also means with concessions as tax holidays, including advanced basic utilities, international amenities and easy access through international airports and seaports, ease of for regular or charter flight services.

Aside from the Expo Pilipino, the foreign filmmakers visited town by Jaime Bautista says that Mayor Pinatubo left on the heels of its 1991 eruptions.

Pure expression, not kung fu

By The Inquirer and Inquirer.net
Entertainment Staff

EVERYWONDERED ABOUT Bamboo's signature (stories) campaign? Put all speculations to rest.

Students asked the web spokem, principal and audience) are reminding Pinoy rock star about those movie that. If the volume were turned off while he made the kind of music that he did, would pass off as a material are musician.

"No, it's not Bong Revilla," he said, as he waived his new campaign during the Inquirer.net anniversary gig up on Saturday. He might add that this was said calmly while he sat as though in a sound-proof bubble, oblivious to the goings-on.

We've seen him do this more than once—create that bubble around him right before taking the mic and rocking the joint, whenever it may be.

Last Saturday, for a morning half-hour, no one could tell it was the 9th coolest cat park.

Led Zep fever

LONDON—Led Zeppelin have opened for hours Sunday to get tickets for the music band's one-off comeback gig, amid tight security.

More than a million people applied for the tickets to Monday's gig, but only 20,000 lucky names were pulled out of a secret ballot to attend the band's first show in 18 years—and, in cheesy cheri line.

It's world rock co-stay and other such superstar rockers, the organizers required all those successful to preserve the O2 arena in southeast London, showing phone IDs to pick up their tickets.

They were given a sealed wristband which could not be taken off until after the gig Monday evening (early yesterday in Manila).

Frontman Robert Plant, guitarist Jimmy Page and bass player John Paul Jones will be joined by Jason Bonham, the son of their late drummer John, whose house fueled crash in 1980 stopped the band's previous very drinking.

Now in their 60s, the band members have promised to pull out all the stops for the one-off show, vowing to play all their classics including rip-defining hits "Stairway to Heaven" and "Whole Lotta Love."

AFP

Top of the Talk Shows

Hot shots who enlivened last week-end's show biz gabfests on TV:

• Dolphy on his ace Randolph wedding gift (Kind: Jenny Sallenas)

"Aanhh...nanahan me alin eh."

• Randolph on wedding gift

"Ahy, Quezon Legister drawing (salos... Kaya ako nagpapahinuli, me-dalya na ito eh. Ayoko ng magbanay pa ng iba."

All's well, as soon

• Pilots Pascual blasting at a scribe

ment to the libel case he filed against Lolit Solis:

"Sino ba ang mga pasto ng kanyang (Sino ba ang gagong magsusumbong sa kanya?" (Then the ang-nagdemanda?)

• Lolit on her willingness to settle:

"Willing se willing ako na makipagkaibigan! Ahhh nakipag-apologize naman sila. Talagang nasaktan na, 'I'm sorry.' 'I feel dumi...she's good for it.)

Acceptance is a virtue

• Sharon Cuneta on meeting up soon more with ex-husband Gabby Concepcion:

"If ako ang ay siya-kung, I guess wala tayong problema. I don't think I'd have the heart to put my husband and children through that... Kasi ...pagkalaki nun pa rin kami ni Gabby. Ang mahalaga hindi kami, yung bata-kanyang mga nung na-

The ICONS (from left) Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones as they appear on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine's latest issue.

Rushes

Choices, choices

• Oswald Guiñez on Imelda Marcos, who remains to the Pinoy Big Brother house:

"Alam ko naman na siya ang nipa... I told him, 'Kasi's sorry. I'll take care of mom, mama... he good in your household.'"

• John Lloyd Cruz on KC Concepcion's remark that she'll like him as a leading man:

"After ng hihindi as isang KC Concepcion? Parang labot in one package—gandak, talented... Eto naman ako para nanonga!!!"

• Gerardo Tribo on visiting son Cedric:

"Siyempre gusto kong ma-experience din ng ganoon (Joel) na makita sila ang pagsusulat."

• Claudia Zobel on why he have already brokered peace between Carlene Aguilar and Gladiss Reyes:

"Nakiusap ko ang both parties. Pero hindi ko naisip na ganoon ka-emot... magkaibigan sina sila. Sabi ang thankful ako ako na nagkaayos sila. Nagka-ayos-ayos dahan-dahil, pinagkaibaan ko nilagay nun." (Ligtas na si Bernie sa gulo.)

• Dennis pertaining to ex-ng single:

"Di para wala nang gulo... na ilagay ang kung nanong nangyari ng-kanyang sa kabit-kanina." (Sige ngan.)

• Gerardo Christmas wish:

"Sana makasama ko ang buo ang Christmas kahit sandali." (How does that song go? "It's your best Christ...")

• Carlene's message to Dennis:

"Ayaw ko siya ang can't stay. Please clarong mag-bitaw ng salita na hindi siya kayang panindigan. Kung sasasabi siyang tatagal ng isang taon, let's wait and see. Sana gabi-gabi siya ang pagsigaw." (Go, girl.)

Nice personal

• Sen. Bong Revilla on his spat with Digital Media Board chief Ishmael Bernal:

"Kinakabahan dapat ang mga personalan. Pinag-usapan na in this its privacy for the good of the whole industry. It's a matter of misunderstanding lang. I am here to help.

Hindi para mangaaba. I'm here to support him. I'm here to help the industry. Hindi para sa akin, sa mga ganito eh. Ako, I'm good on media—what happened?"

• Bala's reaction:

"Kung naiinis si Mr. Revilla dyan, maiinpang sila dala na kung nanggaling ako ng kanyang-kanyang kumpare. Alam po ni Mr. Revilla na come po ang-ginawa ko." (Oh, that na nga.)

"Inano-ano na po natin ang kaibi-kaibigan, kumpare. Asana-kuwang-asakaan ang pinag-usapan dun. Buhay ng tao. Hindi ganoon ka-simple na, 'Para, pasensiya na, kaling-taking na tayo.' Hindi ganoon. Kanyang-kanyang desisyon."

Ang nagiging problema po natin, kahit na nagsisimula ng-na-umbrad na nila yung mga kababan na nagmalat and tapos, you-see parang-ma-lines nung nung mga-ano sa-vida. And so-think na DMB, hindi pa-labas lang yan. Ang mga-labas-din kasi." (Ay, di pa pala.)

• Eddie on Bong's criticism of his performance as DMB-chief:

"Sa dun pa-lat sa-lines, eat only have you-hurt me, you-hurt my family. How can I-forgive you? Hindi pasko ang-sorry, okay na-eh. Wala akong-ma-yan, ma-yong-budget as-komalo. Hindi-ako ang-dahilan-nung-body-guards...dito po ay-magkaibigan, alam-po ng-labas, na-mag-ina. Mga-kaibigan, ang-dahilan-kung 'yung-inisod-sa-akin ng-aking-ama, principles." (Ang-laya pa-palang-magkaibigan.)

• Sharp on his "below-average" rating of Eala's performance:

"Yung-first-song-nod-in down-at-Smarch, 'pero-ay-hear-ex-cpectations-na-than-day. It-was-below-average-on-that-day."

• Eala's reaction:

"Nagsalat po ako... parang-dalay-lang-ang-pagsa-sa-akin. Akoforgi-kasi hindi-ko-siya-nakakausap-eh." (Ang-laya-laya-talaga.)

(Thanks to Starwall, The Beat, Showbiz Cafe-ti and Entertainment Live.)

Pictures of the Year 2007

WET DANCE One of the Deutsches Haus-Pictures of Service) Pictures of the Year 2007 is this one of dancers Cordelia Weiler & Gaston of Germany rehearsing for their show "Oida und danced" at the Bulwin Cultural Centre in Lisbon in March.

Opening Today

From page B1

traveling a roundbuilder (Evans). Bill Lawrence of Empire (sang says that it "will be-gede and orgel in equal measure." Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly thinks it's "spectacularly old, square and devious." Ruthe Stein of San Francisco Chronicle differs: "It's spectacular to look at."

Death Proof

Stars: Kurt Russell, Rosario Dawson, Rose McGowan, Vanessa Thorne

Directed by Quentin Tarantino

One half of the "Grindhouse" double bill (with Robert Rodriguez), this homage to "1970s exploitation flicks" features heroines harassed by an insane stuntman (Russell). Todd McCarthy of Variety relates that "in cruise mode" as ready to be dialogue as to the setup scenes." Devastates Manhoma of The Independent states that it's "cool, sexy, scary and deadeningly violent." Matthew Turner of The New London adds it's "mucky ... sweet."

Taking Aram ng Kadiliman

Stars: Kateyn Santos, Grace Garci, Precious Adona, Bugs Dalgo

Directed by Khoon de la Cruz

Three girls are trapped in their house on the end of the world-crown next. They each try to fend off the demons that are knocking on the door. According to press notice, director De la Cruz "drew on the Book of Revelations" as inspiration. The film's tagline reads: X by the Cruzes because of the name), some-tea blasting some between Santos and Garci, says De la Cruz. Exclusively in Robinsons Galleria Ortigas.

Catacombs

Stars: Shannyn Sossamon, Alexis "Pink" Moore, Gabriel Bruhl, Cain Mancill

Directed by: David Elliot, Tom Cohen

Progressive from the same producers as the hit "Saw," this thriller follows sisters (Sossamon and Moore) who encounter all sorts of horrors in the underground genius of Paris. Architect of Shadows.com rants: It's "slow-paced." Michael Szymbler of Flipside Movie Emporium counters: "It never achieves the level of nasty it-it aspires to." Rotten Tomatoes reviewer complains: "I never really cared for anyone in it."

'Marimar wows fans' . . .

Previous G1

...ning smile knowing she didn't just pop in and out of the scene. The Concert Queen has a devout all her own.

Happy birthday, girl. My message is pure nonsense ... pop-tart moon n off top for me.

Movie promo

I asked Valerie Concepcion for her final say on talks that Andy Pasquiran is forming road or her because of her in- viral kissing scene with Paolino. "I'm so drained with the scene," she says. "I promised myself no more in- comment- any- more."

Miss Bianey Pascua was linked to Sen Bibo, now it's Sylvia's turn. Stony whatever might I look at it, it seems like a (rubbish) stand for their movie. That's what I call "bill" the grandest hotspot Ad Hibiscus!

Cool chew

Catch the coolest youth-oriented show ever to hit your screens, "Bank TV...Alit Rol," Monday to Saturday, 6-7:30 p.m. on Studio 23. They have resident comics which wheeze chuckle get their 15 minutes of fame.

Among the segments, "School is Cool," where celebs are interviewed by Mavis Tiongco about their college days. "Guy5," where Kay Ahmee surveys the top 5 of everything around the Metro, and "First Pick," where Dino Imperial test you in on the latest gizmos and gadgets.

See why there's a kind of buzz about "Bank (TV)" all over the campuses.

Christmas tin

John Sto. Tomas Idol Grand Mall's "Super Panko Inter- School Series" competition. Regions- host is until Dec. 22. Finals is on Dec. 16.

In Christmas Toy Line Manuyugan Connect is from Dec. 17 to 23, with Frank on Dec. 22, while the Christmas Ride Crane is on Dec. 23. For details, call 681-3401 to 10 loc. 118. Ms. Lucia will play Santa Claus to the winners!

E-mail scanning: *bulochangchai@yahoo.com*

LA . . .

From page B4

lesser to Amy Ryan for her film "Gone Baby Gone," in which she plays a neglectful mother whose young daughter has been abducted, and "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead," in which she co-stars as the drug-ravaged son, wife of a man who arranges to rob his parents' jewelry business.

Tamara Jenkins received the screenplay prize for "The Savages," about an estranged brother and sister forced to care for their ailing father.

"There Will Be Blood," director Anderson, star Daniel Day-Lewis, cinematographer Robert Elswit and composer Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead also were the top picks Sunday by the New York Film Critics Online. AP

LA critics pick oil-boom epic as Best Film

LOS ANGELES—THE OIL-BOOM EPIC "There Will Be Blood" was chosen as 2007's Best Film by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, one of the first key groups to weigh in during the long buildup to the Academy Awards.

Based on the novel "Oil!" by Upton Sinclair, the film received three other honors: Best Actor for Daniel Day-Lewis as a California petroleum baron who clashes with his son and a local preacher in the early 1900s; Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson; and Production Design for Jack Fisk.

The Best Actress prize went to Marion Cotillard as singer Edith Piaf in the French film "La Vie En Rose."

The Los Angeles group's picks and upcoming choices from the New York Film Critics Circle precede Thursday's nominations for the Golden Globes, Hollywood's second biggest film honors, after the Oscars.

Globe nominations and critics prizes usually boost Oscar prospects, particularly for lesser-known films and performances. The Oscar awards ceremony is scheduled on Feb. 24.

"3 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days," which won the top honor at the recent Cannes Film Festival, was named Best Foreign Language film by the Los Angeles critics and earned the lingering Actor honor for Vlad Ivanov as a menacing abortion provider.

The critics gave their Supporting Actress SEE CRITICS on A2

DANIEL Day-Lewis is a California petroleum baron who clashes with his son in "There Will Be Blood," which the Los Angeles Film Critics Association voted as Best Film of 2007. Lewis himself was chosen Best Actor. »